RMG still in grip

NEWS

4 Jamaat leaders

In their first move, the defence prayed for withdrawal of the arrest warrants. They also sought certified copies of the prosecution's complaint petition, all order sheets and

relevant documents. The three-member tribunal headed by Justice Nizanul Huq did not accept their applications, as proper procedure was not followed in the filing of

As per the court's instructions, the defence later submitted the applications to Registrar Md Shahinur Islam. The tribunal will tomorrow set a date to hear the prayers.

Though the judges would fix the hearing date in their chamber, they convened the court tomorrow as the prosecution yesterday submitted the second complaint case, which is against Delwar Hossain Sayedee, another detained

Jamaat leader. For yesterday's proceedings, security was tight in and around the old High Court building that houses the tribunal. The law enforcers swept the entire compound to make sure no explosives were planted.

Despite the stringent measures, people gathered to see the four Jamaat leaders, the first ones to have been produced before the tribunal in the war crimes trial.

Though the four are widely known, everyone tried to catch a glimpse of their faces when police placed them in the dock. While being taken to the court building around

10:00am, Nizami, Mojahid, Kamaruzzaman and Quader Molla formed a line as if they were in a pecking order. The tribunal allowed them

to sit in chairs in the dock, which is unusual for someone facing trial The quartet was given

chairs and fan in the lockup as well. They also had access to a well-furnished toilet. While Nizami, Mojahid and Molla were in panjabis and

came in shirt and pants. Mojahid, who drew a lot of flak in 2007 for claiming that anti-liberation forces never even existed, was calm like the

pajamas, Kamaruzzaman

other three. PROCEEDINGS The tribunal's session started at 10:32am.

At the beginning, defence lawyer Zainul Abedin introduced himself to the court. After that, Tajul Islam submitted three separate applications

on behalf of the defendants. Besides praying for recalling of the arrest warrants and seeking certified copies of all the documents in the case, the defence wanted permission for the accused to appoint someone to take necessary legal

The tribunal asked them to file their applications with the registrar. It then showed the detainees arrested in the first

of the tribunal, any information, oral or in writing, obtained by the investigation agency including its own knowledge relating to the commission of a crime comes under section 3(2)

of the International Crimes

Tribunal Act. Offences like war crime and genocide, crimes against humanity and peace like murder, abduction, confinement, torture and rape fall under this

The tribunal on July 26 issued arrest warrants against

that the order could not be executed, as the four were already in prison in different

On July 29, the court directed the prison authorities to produce the Jamaat leaders before it yesterday. "Let the suspects be kept in

custody until further orders in the aforementioned complaint case," tribunal's Chairman Justice Nizanul Huq said, pointing at the detainees in the "They be remanded to

prison with direction to produce them on call," he added. The defence at that stage

asked for 10 minutes to discuss the matter with the detained leaders. But the court refused them saying, "Not today." The tribunal chairman said

as the courtroom is small, everyone must cooperate in conducting the proceedings properly. He asked all to remain seated until the defendants were taken back from the courtroom and the judges left.

Justices ATM Fazle Kabir and AKM Zaheer Ahmed are the other two members of the tribunal.

In his reaction, Mofidul Hoque, a trustee of the Liberation War Museum, told The Daily Star, "It was a historic scene, as for the first time the enemies of humanity were standing trial. It was an extraordinary expression of the inherent strength of truth and justice.' DEFENCE'S STATEMENT

After submitting the applications to the registrar, defence lawyer Tajul Islam told reporters that the arrest warrants against the four were illegal.

He added that section 22 of the tribunal's rules of procedure says an arrest warrant would be issued after cognisance of an offence is taken. Asked about section 9(1) of

the rules that says the tribunal can issue a warrant during investigation for effective probe, the lawyer said there is no question of investigation as the tribunal does not even have a case before it. CASE AGAINST SAYEDEE

The prosecution yesterday filed their second complaint petition to the tribunal registrar. The petition accuses Jamaat's Nayeb-e-Ameer Delwar Hossain Sayedee of genocide, crimes against

humanity and peace in Pirojpur district during the Liberation War. The registrar said the prosecution has prayed for an arrest warrant against Sayedee for proper and effective probe.

since late July in other cases. The court will hear the petition tomorrow.

Sayedee has been detained

Khaleda

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asked the government to return to democracy keeping away from repressing opponents. She said no evil force would be let to snatch away the opposition's right to speak. "BNP is a democratic politi-

As per the rules of procedure cal party. People are its strength. False cases cannot suppress the party," Khaleda said.

She also warned that Awami League-led grand alliance government would have to fall into the trap they have set them-

The government was filing cases against national leaders aiming to restore one-party rule of Baksal, but it would not be successful at all, Khaleda argued.

The three BNP leaders were sued in Dhaka on Sunday and Panchagarh yesterday for the alleged threats to the prime minister on July 25.

Purchase body okays import of 1.8 lakh MT rice, wheat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet committee on purchase yesterday approved a proposal for procuring 1.80 lakh tonnes of rice and wheat to increase food stock.

The meeting, with Finance Minister AMA Muhith in the chair, okayed purchase of 50,000 MT rice at a cost of Tk 84 crore from local suppliers and one lakh tonnes from Vietnam on state-to-state arrangement costingTk270 crore.

Besides, the committee also gave nod to purchase 30,000 MT wheat at Tk 97 crore. The government has taken

various initiatives to increase food stock as it dropped substantially in recent times. The total stock of food on July 24 was 5.85 lakh tonnes,

which was 12.84 lakh tonnes on

the same date last year. The purchase body last month endorsed a proposal to import 2.60 lakh tonnes of rice and wheat. It also consented to import 1.1 lakh MT petroleum

products. Law expert's

FROM PAGE 16 the rules of International Crimes Tribunal Act.

The Tribunal can issue warrant of arrest against somebody only after it frames charges against the accused in connection with any specific case, said Anisul.

Citing Section 11(5) of the Act, he added, "Any member of a Tribunal shall have power to direct, or issue warrant for the arrest of, and to commit to custody, and to authorise the continued detention in custody of any person charged with any crime specified in section 3."

Section 3 described the crimes against humanity and peace, genocide and other offences committed during the 1971 Liberation War.

While his attention was drawn on the rules of procedure of the Tribunal, the seasoned lawyer said the Tribunal's order issuing warrant of arrest was right as per the rules of proce-

Anisul, principal counsel in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman murder case, observed anomalies between the Act and its rules of procedure.

The Tribunal on July 26 issued arrest warrants against Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Motiur Rahman Nizami, Secretary General Ali Ahsan Muhammad Mojahid and Senior Assistant Secretaries General Muhammad Kamaruzzaman and Abdul Quader Molla on charges of committing genocide and crimes against humanity and peace.

Govt won't

FROM PAGE 1

them take up underground politics and create trouble in the country.

Presiding over the weekly cabinet meeting at Bangladesh Secretariat, Hasina said it is the Election Commission which will oversee the political parties as to whether they fulfil the terms and conditions for getting registration with the commission.

"Restoration of the '72 constitution does not mean that many religion-based political parties will be banned. The government will take no measure in favour or against any party," a senior cabinet minister quoted the premier as

The government would not put any pressure on the Election Commission to ban any party. If any party fulfils the criteria for registration of political party with the commission, it will be allowed to do politics, the minister quoted the prime minister as saying.

The minister, also a close aide to Hasina, said the EC set the terms and references for registration with the EC as political parties during the caretaker government. "At that time, all the parties were considered equally. So, it is the Election Commission to make the decision in this regard," added the minister.

At the cabinet meeting, Hasina also reiterated that the words "Bismillah-Ar-Rahman-Ar-Rahim" in the preamble to the constitution will remain as it is, since it reflect the beliefs of the people, highly-placed government sources told The Daily Star after the meeting.

A number of the ministers sought premier's move in preventing ministers and lawmakers from speaking too much about the restoration of '72 constitution without knowing much details. The ministers told the cabinet that people are confused due to some of their colleague's misleading and contradictory speeches on the constitution amendments, sources that attended the cabi-

the matter.

net meeting told The Daily Star. In response, the premier directed all her colleagues not to make any misleading statements on the amendments since an all-party parliamentary committee is dealing with

Tk 775cr loss

FROM PAGE 16 He said both the buyers and manufacturers may cover the losses, as the unrest lasted for a short period. But it is not possible to cover the losses if caused in long-term unrest, he added.

David Hasanat, chairman and managing director of Viyellatex Group, said Bangladesh has abundant orders from the international buyers right now.

He said many orders from China are shifting to Bangladesh, as the Chinese manufacturers are seeking higher profits outside the RMG and textile sectors. The Chinese manufacturers

are suffering from an acute shortage of workforce, as workers also shifting to betterpaying jobs with automakers and makers of electronics devices, he said. Moreover, the RMG and textiles sectors are losing migrant workers, who are reluctant to work in urban RMG factories when there are factories near their villages.

The trade union leaders say labour peace gradually returned to the industrial hubs such as Ashulia and Narayanganj after an informal agreement among workers' leaders, the government and the owners on Sunday. Amirul Haque Amin, presi-

dent of National Garment Workers' Federation, expected normalcy to be fully restored within one or two days. He said the trade unionists have calmed the workers and urged them to accept the new minimum wage.

Amin, who represented 42 trade unions in Sunday's tri-

Food prices

FROM PAGE 16 affluent while the pains go to

the low income population". The MPS also reads that

upward revision of prices of gas, fuel, oil and power is the likely main cause for domestic inflation in Bangladesh in the current fiscal year. However, in the MPS the

central bank gave assurance that various steps would be taken to contain inflation. The BB in the MPS recom-

mended that the government take different measures to keep inflation in check. It said the government

needs to remain proactive in facilitating and enforcing orderly functioning of wholesale and retail markets and supply chains.

partite dialogue at BGMEA, said some minor incidents of unrest took place yesterday in Ashulia and Narayanganj. "I hope such kinds of small

incidents will not take place from tomorrow [today], as the trade union leaders have been trying to bring back normalcy in the industrial areas.' **BGMEA President Abdus**

Salam Murshedy said teams have started working with the workers to restore normalcy in the industrial areas. A BGMEA director yesterday visited some factories in

Ashulia to hold talks with the workers and other officials concerned. Meanwhile, the workers representatives on Sunday agreed to the new pay structure for the garment sector and

pledged cooperation to ensure

normal work environment.

Bus driver

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women and children affairs Razia Begum and Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) Chairman Siddiqur Rahman were killed in a head-on collision between a rashly-driven bus and their car at Uthuli in Manikganj Saturday.

They were going to Gopalganj from Dhaka to attend a programme where was supposed to attend the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Blackmailer cops captured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two police constables on deputation at the Anti-Corruption Commission were arrested yesterday evening in connection with blackmailing people with fake ACC notices. The arrestees, Faruk

Hossain and Khasru Jahan, were handed over to Ramna Police Station. The ACC investigated a

number of complaints against the two and found that they used to issue fake notices using the name of ACC and blackmail people into giving them money, Officer-in-Charge of Ramna Police Station Shiblee Noman told The Daily Star last night. ACC Assistant Director

Jahangir Alam handed over the arrestees to Ramna police and filed a case against them.

CU shut

identified as Rajib Nandi, university correspondent of

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the daily Kaler Kantho, was wounded during the police The aggrieved students in

different groups then went on the rampage at CUCSU building and different faculty buildings protesting the police attack.

They, however, blamed a section of students for the andalism.

Tobarak Hossain, a student, said, "Some students started vandalism all of a sudden ignoring our request."

Samajtantrik Chhatra Front CU unit president Probal Mazumder said they requested the students not to involve in vandalism but they ignored the request.

The clash took a violent turn when police lobbed tear shells and fired rubber bullets on them near Arts Faculty around 11:00pm prompting the students to retaliate with stones and brickbats.

Police hurled tear shells and fired rubber bullets to disperse another group of agitating students near Shaheed Minar around 12:00

The law enforcers also fired rubber bullets and teargas shells inside Shamsunnahar Hall where the students took shelter as police went on a counter offensive. Protesting the police

attack, around 1,000 female students from Shamsunnahar and Pritilata Halls brought out a procession around 1:30pm. As the procession reached near Shaheed Minar, police charged batons to disperse them injuring around 50 female students.

claimed that at least 200 students were injured in yesterday's series of clashes and many of them were rubber bullet-hit. The situation came under

control at about 3:00pm as the students started leaving the campus. Officer-in-Charge those are not included in Mohiuddin Selim of Hathazari

Police Station said around 250 rounds of rubber bullets were fired and over 60 tear-gas canisters were lobbed to bring the situation under control.

At least 20 policemen including him and ASP of Hathazari circle Babul Akhter

were injured by stones thrown at them, the OC said adding that they detained around 50 students from different spots of the campus during the Police raided Shahjalal

Hall, Shah Amanat Hall and

Suhrawardi Hall around

4:00pm and picked over 200 students from there, he added INCREASED FEES The decision of fee hike was proposed at the 298th meeting of the university finance committee, which was later approved at the 459th syndi-

According to the syndicate decision, the increased fees were made effective from July 1 this year.

cate meeting on May 22 this

Admission fees in the first vear were increased to Tk 4,100 from Tk 3,420 for Science Faculty and Tk 3,200 from Tk 3,030 for the Arts, Commerce, Social Science and Law Faculties, according to the sources in CU.

Tuition fees for second third and fourth year nonresident students were increased to Tk 2,230 from Tk 1,327 for Science Faculty (except Mathematics Department) and Tk 2,170 from Tk 1,327 for other faculties while for Masters classes Tk 3,115 from Tk 2,186 for science faculty and Tk 2,655 from Tk 1,796 for other facul-Tuition fees for second

third and fourth year resident students were increased to Tk 2,740 from Tk 1,911 for Science Faculty (except Mathematics Department) ACC Assistant Director and Tk 2,680 from Tk 1,851 for other faculties.

Meanwhile, fees for improvement examination Prosenjit, another student, were increased to highest Tk 600 from highest Tk 180. The students claimed that

> the departments are realising more money from them without giving any receipt. Asked, Vice Chancellor Prof Yusuf said the departments collect money for different

bound," he added.

purposes like excursion, and Uddin was sentenced to three tuition fees. The hiked fees are in no way beyond the affordability of the students, he claimed.

"We increased the fees for improvement examination in order to make the students class and examinationwere defended by advocate Ahsanul Karim.

Man beaten to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criminals beat a staff of an inter-district bus service operator to death after abducting him from his house in Gopibagh in the capital late Sunday.

The victim, Mezbahuddin Ahmed Mizu, 45, used to look after the operations of Sea Line Bus Service in Noakhali. His cousin Abdus Sobhan

told The Daily Star that one

Rubel asked him to come out of his house on RK Mission Road, Gopibagh around 12:30am Sunday night, on pretext of having important discussions with him. Another man Haider Ali Babu was waiting with him. As

soon as Mizu came out, the two pounced on him and dragged him away. Mizu's cell phone was also

found switched off since then.

His relatives were informed about a badly injured Mizu at 2:00pm from an office of the Awami League in Ward-90. They rushed to the spot and took him to Monwara General Hospital at Manik Nagar where doctors declared him dead around 3:30pm.

Officer-in-Charge of Shyampur Police Station said Mizu was taken to Ati Bazar, Keraniganj, where he was beaten to death. A driver of a two-stroke

autorickshaw found him critically injured and brought him to the AL office since twostroke autorickshaw were banned from plying the streets of Dhaka. Mizu gave the locals the

contact number of his rela-

tives who later came and took him to the hospital. Though Mizu's mobile phone set was found in his pocket, the SIM was missing,

said Sobhan.

Nine months earlier Mizu's brother, Moslehuddin Shahin, a CNG filling station owner was abducted by miscreants from right outside his house. His body was recovered from Kaliganj, Gazipur 13 days after his abduction, said Sobhan.

"We are suspecting the gang of Ali Raja may have killed them both over landrelated dispute," said Sobhan.

Tofazzal Hossain, OC of Motijheel Police Station, said they recovered the body from the house of Mizu's relatives in the afternoon. No case has yet been filed with his station.

5 acquitted

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Meanwhile, ACC lawyer MA Aziz Khan said the anti-graft body is yet to decide whether it would file appeals with the Supreme Court against the HC judgements.

On April 13, 2008, a special court sentenced Shahjahan Chowdhury to 10 years imprisonment for accumulating illegal wealth and concealing information about it. This court the same day

sentenced Faisal Morshed Khan to seven years in jail for aiding and abetting Shahjahan. On July 1, 2007, ACC Deputy Director Abul Kalam filed the case with Bandar

Police Station in Chittagong against Shahjahan on charge of concealing information on wealth worth Tk 50.49 lakh in his wealth statement to the On August 26, 2007 another special court sen-

tenced Pankaj to 13 years' imprisonment in a similar Pankaj was sentenced to 10 years' rigorous and three years' simple imprisonment under the ACC Act for accu-

mulating wealth worth over Tk

64 lakh illegally and conceal-

ing information from the ACC about Tk 4.64 lakh. Akhter Hossain was awarded 10 years' imprisonment on January 30, 2008, for amassing wealth beyond known sources of his income and concealing wealth infor-

Mahbubul Alam filed the graft case against Akhter and his wife Nazeen Banu with Uttara Police Station on May 31, 2007. According to the case,

Akhter obtained wealth worth Tk 2.23 crore by abusing power and concealed information about Tk 80 lakh in a statement submitted to the ACC earlier. On July 4, 2007, Helal

years in jail for aiding his father in protecting their property amassed "illegally". Barrister Abdur Razzaq

appeared for Shahjahan and AJ Mohammad Ali for Akhter. Pankaj, Faisal and Helal phone was apparently switched off late last night and

FROM PAGE 1 help keep normal work environment in industrial areas.

Agitating workers got involved in a series of clashes with police at Katherpool of Fatulla and adjoining areas in Narayanganj leaving 50 people injured. They demanded Tk 5,000 as

minimum wage with effect from August 1 and immediate release of Montu Ghosh, adviser of Garment Sramik Trade Union Kendra and district CPB unit president. They pelted the law enforc-

ers with brickbats and attacked two garment factories, over 50 shops and houses on the post office road. They also damaged five vehicles, reports our Narayanganj correspondent. Ten policemen including

Assistant Superintendent of Police Reazul Kabir, SI Shahidul Islam, constable Harun and Shahidul Islam were wounded in the clash. About 40 others including ATN Bangla Narayanganj correspondent Abdus Salam,

Rahman, and garment workers Rehana, Zarina, Raja Mia, Kalam Mia, Asma, Sakila, Jobeda and Rehena Begum were also injured in the clashes. Police lobbed 50 teargas canisters to bring the situation

BTV correspondent Mahfuzur

under control. The angry labourers put barricades on the Dhaka-Narayanganj Link Road in Shibu Market area shortly after 11:00am bringing the traffic to

a halt for three hours. The authorities of nine export-oriented garment factories at Fatulla wrote to the deputy commissioner and the police super urging them to ensure proper security at the factories. Witnesses said, about

20,000 workers of Pall Mall Mircrofibre, Liberty, Midland and Cadtrex Garments turned up at the factories. They demonstrated inside the factories instead of joining work. They hurled brickbats at

Nearly 12,000 workers from different garment factories in Katherpool area took to the streets at around 10:30am defying police obstruction. The labourers and law

enforcers got involved in chase

and counter chase prompting

police from the rooftops.

the police to lob 50 teargas Meantime, 30 RMG workers were injured in Ashulia after they clashed with police protesting the new pay hike, which they say is still too low, adds a

correspondent from Ashulia. Five workers were arrested on the Bishmile-Jirabo road, the scene of violence.

Police filed a case accusing

700 workers of vandalism on Sunday. Authorities of 12 garment factories in the area announced holiday yesterday

fearing clash. The workers attacked three garment factories and made a fire in front of one of the factories. They also blocked the Bishmile-Jirabo road shortly after 10:00am.

The labourers got involved in chase and counter chase with police when the law enforcers tried to restore vehicular movement on the road. They pelted the policemen

teargas canisters. Fire fighters doused the flame in front of the factory

with brick chips prompting

them to fire rubber bullets and

Goyeshwar

FROM PAGE 1

as a member of the standing committee. He mentioned personal reasons for his move, party insiders said. Goyeshwar could not be

reached for his comments late

last night. His mobile phone

was apparently switched off.

Even BNP high-ups refused to make any comment on this. The BNP chairperson was in a meeting with a number of BNP leaders at her Gulshan office, said Jashim Uddin, an executive at the BNP office, around 1:00am today. He could not say whether Goyeshwar's sudden move

was being discussed there. Party insiders said conflict between Goyeshwar and Aman Ullah Aman took a turn for worse during the last couple of months. They were made standing committee member and joint secretary general during the party's last council on December 8.

The feud intensified centring the recently-formed Keraniganj convening committee of BNP. Both the leaders come from Keraniganj. Goyeshwar recently com-

plained to Khaleda Zia about his conflict with Aman but he seemed dissatisfied as Khaleda Zia did not interfere, a mid-level BNP leader commented on condition of anonymity. Goyeshwar, who served as the general secretary of Jubo

Dal, was also upset as he was bypassed during the formation of different organisational units of Jubo Dal, said the leader. The Daily Star failed to reach Aman Ullah Aman as his

in the wee hours today.

Meanwhile, production in two garment units -- Orchid

Knitwear and Global Knitting in the port city -- was halted after the workers demonstrated in the morning demanding a pay hike. They agreed to join work as the factory authorities agreed to increase "piece-rate" after a

meeting at about 2:00pm, said

Md Moyeen Uddin, deputy secretary of Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA). The workers of the two garment units had also staged demonstrations on Sunday

night demanding a raise in The workers attacked two

factories of Azim Group and three other factories nearby. Police swung into action

swiftly and brought the situation under control RESTRICTION ON FOREIGNERS'

INVOLVEMENT WITH TU The cabinet has decided not to allow any foreign national with tourist visa to get involved with trade unions in Bangladesh. The decision came at a

Minister Sheikh Hasina in the The cabinet expressed concern over the recent labour unrest in the garment sector.

weekly meeting with Prime

Many foreign nationals with tourist visa have been involved with trade unions and are causing unrest in the sector for the interests of their nations, the meeting was told. "It will be strictly overseen

from now on so that no foreign

national can come to

Bangladesh with tourist visa to get involved with trade unions. If they want to come here for this purpose, they must get visas under a special category from the Bangladesh government," a senior minister told The Daily Star wishing anonymity. The government has a list of foreign nationals, who

tourist visa and got involved with trade unions with the help of many NGOs, said sources close to the meeting. Many of them are staying in Bangladesh although their

came to Bangladesh with

visas have already expired, added the sources. Nepal holds 4th round of PM poll

Thursday

IANS, Kathmandu Uncertain of being able to elect a new prime minister vesterday in the third round of an unprecedented, protracted battle for power, Nepal's major parties have agreed to

hold a fourth round of election Alarmed by signs that parliament would fail to elect a successor to caretaker Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal more than a month after his resignation, the chairman of the house, Subhash Nembang, called an emergency meeting with the chief whips of the three major

Congress (NC) and communists - to decide on a fresh date for a fourth round of election. As lawmakers readied to cast their vote to choose between Maoist supremo and former premier Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda and former deputy prime minister and NC leader Ram Chandra Poudel the fear of yet another fiasco

grew stronger with the com-

munists and nearly 10 minor

parties - the Maoists, Nepali

parties saying they would abstain from voting. Yesterday's election also threatens to be delayed as a bloc of four ethnic parties from the Terai plains, who can help the Maoists return to power, failed to reach a lastminute deal with them and began yet another interminable meeting of its own alliance

The Maoists, who led a short-lived government for eight months, have an edge over the NC by virtue of being the largest party in parlia-Prachanda needs to woo

partners to plan its strategy.

only about 70 votes from outside parties to attain a simple majority of 301 MPs. The Maoists, once a banned underground party,

won 237 seats in the election two years ago that saw them come to power for the first time. For yesterday's poll, they have been assured of the support of a minor communist party, the Nepal Workers and Peasants Party that has five MPs. The NC, once Nepal's

largest party but humbled in

2008 election, has only 114

seats of its own and is facing a tough struggle to form a government. Two earlier rounds of the election turned into a stalemate after the caretaker PM's

party, the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), turned vengeful following an aborted attempt to take part in it Enmity within the party and bitter rivalry with the Maoists and NC has made the UML now sit on the fence, refusing to vote for either side.

the four Jamaat leaders. But later, it received a police report Slow lanes

The first such lane will be constructed at a cost of Tk 33 crore on the highway between Tangail and Sirajganj, one of the accident-prone highways,

he added.

highways.

During the weekly meeting at Bangladesh Secretariat, the cabinet pinned faulty road designs, use of fake licences by drivers, drivers' ignorance about road safety and their long working hours as the main reasons behind the frequent

accidents. Drivers' assistants doing the driving, violation of traffic rules and reckless driving also contribute to accidents and deaths on roads, the cabinet observed. About half the 9 lakh driving

licences being used are fake,

according to Bangladesh Road Transport Authority. The cabinet identified that designs of the country's major highways were faulty due to donors' prescription, previous government's lack of sincerity, absence of separate lanes for slow-moving vehicles and filling stations too close to

The prime minister

expressed deep concern over

the recent surge in road accidents and directed departments concerned including home and communications ministries to strictly enforce law to bring an end to it. "No negligence in this regard will be tolerated," she warned her colleagues, a meet-

ing source quoted her as say-She also directed all ministries and departments concerned to train governmentemployed drivers on road

safety and sit with transport

minister after the meeting quoted Hasina as saying. The premier also asked all ministers and officials to give their drivers enough break while they are on duty. "Arrange monthly training sessions for the drivers on traffic rules and road safety mea-

told the cabinet. She asked ministries concerned to stop the use of fake licences by drivers and make sure that drivers abide by traffic rules. condolence motion on the death of Secretary in-charge of

The prime minister donated Tk 30 lakh to Siddigur Rahman's bereaved family and Tk 20 lakh to Razia Begum's

Press Secretary Abul Kalam authorities concerned to go licence.

vehicle owners, who operate vehicles on long routes, to implement shifts for drivers jobs as immediate measures. "She instructed us to sit with the bus owners to stop long

working hours of drivers and

ensure proper design of roads

in future..." a senior cabinet

sures," she was quoted as

"I myself saw drivers not following traffic rules," Hasina The cabinet also adopted a

the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs Razia Begum and Chairman of Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation Siddiqur Rahman.

Briefing newsmen after the meeting, Prime Minister's Azad said Hasina directed tough on traffic rules violators and people involved in anomalies while issuing driving