Saudis freer but rights not institutionalised

tions for this," said Christoph

Wilcke, the principal author of

ness... that this is a king with a

reform agenda," he told report-

ers in Riyadh in a conference

deeper I dug the less concrete

an atmosphere for less restric-

tions on women, including

allowing them to move about

with less concern of being

Nevertheless, women are

hassled by the fearsome reli-

still not allowed to drive and

must obtain the written per-

mission of their male guard-

The report noted that

ciary, with more training, and

specialised courts, but said

"implementation of these

proposals has been halting at

not been codified, Wilcke

Arabia, it is up to the judge

alone to determine what is a

331 suspects accused of Al-

Qaeda membership "failed to

meet basic standards of fair-

ness," with summary hear-

ings in secret processing all

the cases, according to the

Against this backdrop, an

Finance Minister AMA Muhith

in the chair on September 8

took up the issue. It was

attended by ministers for

planning, industries and post

and telecommunications, the

prime minister's economic

adviser, governor of

Bangladesh Bank and high

officials of the ministries

the government will accept

the Chinese conditions and

commercial contract, the

highest caution has to be

exercised to ensure that the

interest of Bangladesh is

included in the current fiscal

year's annual development

programme. Shahjalal factory

project is scheduled to be

completed by June 2013 and

the 3G Technology project by

during the prime minister's

visit to China last year, Beijing

expressed its interest to give

the credit as part of providing

collect a copy of the list from

counsels of the contempt of

court petitioners. A counsel of

the petitioners at that time

told the HC that the list he had

ment ministry later collected a

copy of the list from the peti-

tioners who tagged it with

their petitions and sent it to

the law ministry that moved to

scrutinise the claims of 190

three-member probe body

sent one of its members, Abu

Ahmed Majumder, who is also

a deputy secretary of the law

ministry, to the establishment

ministry to check the docu-

ments containing names of

during investigation it was

learned that there was an

original list of 1,632 employ-

ees in the custody of the estab-

lishment ministry. The list and

other papers concerned were

authenticated in 1985 and the

ministry's then deputy secre-

tary Abdul Kayum Bhuiyan

find the copy of the list and

viewed the so-called 189 staffs

and concluded that a syndi-

cate across the country is

active and providing in

exchange of money fake

appointment and release

letters of the historic govern-

before the committee inter-

One of the 190 staffs died

other papers concerned.

But the probe body did not

The probe body inter-

The probe report said

During investigation, a

However, the establish-

was not authenticated.

Mujibnagar staffs.

Mujibnagar staffs.

signed those.

viewed them.

loans for different projects.

Sources pointed out that

The two projects have been

sign the agreement.

The meeting decided that

It noted that in signing the

concerned.

upheld.

June 2012.

Mujibnagar govt's

The sharia-based law has

For that reason "in Saudi

Moreover, trials last year of

ians in order to travel.

"There is a growing aware-

However, he added: "The

Wilcke said Abdullah has set

the report.

reform I found."

gious police.

points out.

crime," he said.

report.

\$770m Chinese loan

ERD sources mentioned that inter-ministerial meeting with

Says HRW

AFP, New York

Saudis have become freer in the five years of King Abdullah's reign but civil rights remain far from institutionalised and vulnerable to political change, Human Rights Watch said yesterday.

In its annual report on Saudi Arabia, the New York-based rights watchdog underscored the "looser reign" of the 86year-old Abdullah, but warned that reform gains could disappear in the future.

"Should his enthusiasm for reform wane, or successors tread more conservative paths, his legacy would be one of a brief respite of fresh air, but not one of institutional reform," the report said of Abdullah.

The king's reforms have Abdullah launched important loosened some restrictions on structural reforms of the judiwomen, boosted a sense of fairness in the Islamic shariabased judicial system, and increased freedom of expression in the ultra-conservative Gulf monarchy, HRW said.

However, non-Muslims still cannot practice their religion openly and minority Shiites are actively discriminated against in the majority-Sunni country, despite Abdullah's own interfaith relations initiative, it said.

It added that more than eight million migrant workers and their families in the country continue to be denied basic "The king is laying down

markers but not going the one step further to build institu-

the interest rate is slightly

higher than that of the

\$1billion credit from India

under the recently signed deal

but it is lower than that of

suppliers' credits offered by

China in the past. The rate of

interest on Indian credit is 1.75

percent and commitment

set conditions that

Bangladesh will have to sign

commercial contracts with

China National Complete

Plant Import and Export

Corporation Ltd to get credit

for Shahjalal factory and with

China National Machinery

and Equipment Import and

Export Corporation for 3G

An ERD official said signing

of the commercial contract is

mandatory as per China's new

credit policy. And the ERD had

sought clarification from the

Chinese government as to why

a commercial contract has to

The Chinese government

nformed the ERD that it has

introduced the new policy for

The establishment ministry in

August last year could not

provide the law ministry with

a copy of the historic docu-

ment, as the ministry did not

In response to an April 13,

2008 letter of the law ministry

that sought the copy of the

document to check authentic-

ity of the 190 so-called staffs,

the establishment ministry on

August 11, 2008 expressed its

ministry, the establishment

ministry also cited its former

secretary's confession to the

High Court about missing of

the historic document during

hearing of contempt petitions.

copy of the letter with its

enquiry report. According to

the letter, some so-called

staffs of the Mujibnagar gov-

ernment filed a number of

contempt petitions against

the government for the delay

in absorbing them in the

services in line with the apex

court's order delivered earlier.

during hearing of the con-

tempt petitions ordered the

then establishment secretary

to appoint by August 19, 2008

the Mujibnagar staffs who

were enlisted among 1,632

employees but were not

order, the then establishment

secretary told the court that

the ministry did not have the

document containing names

The court asked him to

In response to the HC

absorbed.

of the staffs.

The HC on July 24, 2008

The probe body tagged a

In the letter sent to the law

have it in its custody.

nability.

giving concessionary loans.

be signed beforehand.

technology and 2.5G network.

The Chinese government

charge is 0.5 percent.

FROM PAGE 1

to bring scientist home AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan

trying hard

Pakistan said yesterday it would leave "no stone unturned" in trying to bring home a woman scientist sentenced to 86 years in jail by a US court.

A New York court Thursday found Aafia Siddiqui, a once brilliant scientist dubbed "Lady Qaeda" by US tabloids, guilty of the attempted murder of US military officers in Afghanistan in 2008 -- five years after she disappeared.

"We will leave no stone unturned in our efforts to bring her back. We are following both legal and political approaches to get her back," Interior Minister Rehman Malik told a news conference.

He added that the government was concerned about the 38-year old neuroscientist's mental and physical condition and was considering appealing on behalf of Siddiqui's mother and sister to President Barack Obama to pardon her.

"We are concerned about Dr Siddiqui's living conditions and we would like her not to be transferred to the federal prison," he said.

"We are writing a letter to the US authorities to know about her health and mental condi-

The case of Siddiqui, a mother of three who trained at the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Brandeis University, has been condemned across the nucleararmed Muslim nation of 167 million.

Media

FROM PAGE 1

said it is natural that the representatives would come with many recommendations for the welfare of the

"Instead of taking it as a pressure, the local administration should work in coordination with them to ensure local development and implement the government's vision 2021, added Imam. About the pressure to recruit

ruling party adherents, he said the government is very strict about this. "The appointments will absolutely be based on merit and qualification."

He said the appointment process of civil servants is being reformed to ensure good gover-

He also said that the administration needs to have the government permission prior to holding any view exchange programmes, which they did not do before the Thursday's

Meanwhile, State Minister for Home Affairs Shamsul Haque Tuku claimed that the miscreants of the attack on government officers did not belong to Awami League. He said police are looking for the real culprits behind the scene and all of them would be brought to book.

He said, "Those who are involved in criminal activities do not belong to the party."

Later at a meeting at the circuit house with local Awami League, Jubo League and Chhatra League leaders, Imam asked the party men not to engage in anything that may

tarnish the party image. He asked party leaders and activists to lawfully protest against everything unjust and not to wage a movement against the DC, as the administration is

a part of the government. Shamsul Haque Tuku, who is the lawmaker from Pabna-5 constituency, and leaders and activists of the district unit Al and its associate organisations were present in the one and a

halfhour-long meeting. More than 100 Jubo League and Chhatra League activists on September 17 attacked two examination centres as DCAFM Monjur Kadir refused to enter tain various demands of AI lawmaker Golam Faruk Prince.

The attackers assaulted a number of government officers including two additional deputy commissioners and a female magistrate and vandalised a few vehicles of the offi

Following the incident, two magistrates filed two cases with Pabna Sadar Police Station accusing more than 100 people including 31 Jubo League and Chhatra League leaders and activists.

Police arrested Chhatra League activist Shohag from the town's Library Bazaar area yesterday afternoon. He was one of the five absconding accused in the cases.

On Sunday, 21 Awami League, Jubo League and Chhatra League men accused of attacking government officials were sent to jail after they had surrendered before Pabna Judicial Magistrate Laila

Sharmin. Police earlier arrested five Jubo League and Chhatra League activists on charge of involvement in the attack.

Nato air strikes in Pakistan violate **UN mandate: official**

mandate "terminates/finishes'

pursuit' rules. Any impression

to the contrary is not factually

correct. Such violations are

unacceptable," the foreign

not to participate in any military

action that violates the UN

mandate and infringes upon

ate corrective measures,

Pakistan will be constrained to

consider response options," it

had always emphasised the

need for "coordinated and joint

down on Islamist havens along

the Afghan border, Pakistan has

in the past year stepped up

military operations against

came amid a surge in US drone

strikes in Pakistan's lawless

tribal belt, which is considered a

safe haven for Taliban and Al-

Qaeda-linked operatives and is

branded the most dangerous

the missile strike yesterday

which was 19th attack in 24

150,000 US and Nato troops in

Afghanistan are believed to be

holed up in Pakistan's tribal

areas, as are operatives at war

its most ambitious military

offensive yet against Taliban

militants in South Waziristan,

expanding the campaign to

many of the other seven semi-

autonomous tribal districts

She said one e-centre will

be set up at each of the 8,000

post offices and about 4,500

unions brought under the

About electricity shortage,

the PM said although it is a

legacy handed down by the

four-party alliance govern-

ment, the present government

attached priority to the sector

and added 1,000 megawatt of

electricity to the national grid

during the last one and half

years while it has plans to

include another 2,500 MW

upon the expatriate

Bangladeshis to invest in the

country's vital power sector

taking the advantage of the

government's favourable

would not have to face power

crisis if the BNP-Jamaat gov-

ernment had taken any initia-

tive to increase electricity

ment could not add a single

megawatt of electricity, rather

it had destroyed the sector

through corruption and mis-

management during its ten-

ure," she said adding that it

had been making business in

the name of 'Khamba' (elec-

mination to eliminate terror-

despite several terrorist

bowed before the forces of

allowed in the soil of

Bangladesh," she said

ment is committed to turn

Bangladesh into the most

peaceful nation in South Asia

free from poverty, hunger and

has achieved tremendous

progress in the ICT and com-

munications sectors. "We

have a plan to introduce e-

centre at all post offices and

also put emphasis on rail and

river communications to ease

traffic congestions in Dhaka,

tions of expatriate

Bangladeshis to the country's

economy, the PM said her

government always considers

welfare of the expatriate

Bangladeshis as they are

playing a very important role

in economic development of

Awami League Dr Khaled

Hasan presided over the

reception while Finance

Minister AMA Muhith, Foreign

Minister Dipu Moni, Chief

Whip Abdus Shahid and PM's

son and eminent IT specialist

Sajib Wazed Joy, among oth-

ers, also addressed.

President of USA unit of

Mentioning the contribu-

the capital city."

Bangladesh.

She said her government

Hasina said her govern-

Expressing her firm deter-

"The BNP-Jamaat govern-

Hasina said that country

investment policy.

production.

tric pole)

unequivocally.

militancy.

In this regard, she called

within the next one year.

optical fibre network.

along the border.

Biman's NY flight

Last year Pakistan launched

with Pakistani security forces.

Four militants were killed in

Militants fighting against

place on earth by Washington.

The rare helicopter attacks

largely homegrown militants.

action" against insurgents.

"In the absence of immedi-

The statement said Pakistan

Under US pressure to crack

It said ISAF had been asked

"There are no agreed 'hot

at the Afghanistan border.

office statement added.

Pakistan's sovereignty.

warned.

NEWS

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan vesterday lodged a strong protest with Nato over air strikes by the alliance's helicopters on its territory near the Afghan border saying they violated a UN mandate, the foreign office said.

The attack by the Nato-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) helicopters on Friday left more than 30 insurgents dead, an ISAF statement issued in Kabul on Sundaysaid.

Pakistan said the helicopters intruded into its territory twice from the eastern Afghan province of Khost as they chased the militants.

"These incidents are a clear violation and breach of the UN mandate under which ISAF operates," foreign office spokesman Abdul Basit said in a statement.

The ISAF statement admitted that "an air weapons team engaged a significant number of insurgents following an attack on a remote Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) outpost in Khost province Friday.

"ANSF received direct and indirect fire at Combat Outpost Narizah near the Pakistan border. An air weapons team in the area observed the enemy fire, and following International Security Assistance Force rules of engagement, crossed into the area of enemy fire."

ISAF aircraft then fired on the militants killing more than 30, the statement said, adding that two helicopters returned to the border area on Saturday and killed several more insurgents.

"Initial reports indicate no civilian were injured or killed during either operation," the ISAF statement said.

FROM PAGE 1

Hotel Hilton yesterday.

Pakistan said ISAF's saying

The government is actively

considering establishment of

a Non-Resident Bangladeshi

(NRB) Bank to create safe

opportunity for the expatri-

ates to invest their hard-

earned money, Hasina added.

money of expatriate

Bangladeshis will be a good

investment in the proposed

NRB Bank rather than spend-

ing the money in unproduc-

tive sectors like constructing

The proposed bank will

The premier said a similar

carry out commercial activi-

ties along with ensuring the

bank--Expatriate Welfare

Bank--with government fund

will help aspirant Bangladeshi

manpower to meet their cost

intending to go abroad on

employment will no longer be

needed to sell all their proper-

ties as they could now borrow

the money from the Expatriate

NRBs to invest in ICT and

communications sectors to

help the government imple-

ment its vision of building

digital Bangladesh by the year

Terming democracy as the

main pre-requisite for democ-

racy, the premier said she is

working tirelessly to establish

true democracy in the country

as without democracy eco-

nomic emancipation of the

common people is impossi-

election manifesto her gov-

ernment has "brought down

the prices of essentials within

the reach of the common

people" and reduced the

prices of fertilisers for attain-

ing food autarky through

boosting agricultural produc-

tion pledge of trying the war

criminals of 1971, she said the

process of trial has already

begun and all war criminals

will be brought to justice in the

Hasina said the present

government like her previous

tenure puts highest priority on

education and announced a

universal education policy

taking the opinions of all

concerned into consideration.

ing of providing free educa-

tion up to degree level and a

committee has already been

formed to examine the ways to

She listed the various

efforts of her government for

the welfare of the people

through building a prosper-

ous 'Sonar Bangla' as dreamt

by the father of nation

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur

introduce the system."

"The government is think-

soil of Bangladesh.

Referring to another elec-

She said in line with its

2021.

Hasina called upon the

Welfare Bank, she added.

Bangladeshi workers

of going abroad for job.

welfare of the NRBs, she said.

big houses in their villages.

She said the hard-earned

BSF says **FROM PAGE 16**

Earlier on Sunday, the BDR and BSF exchanged two lists of criminals wanted in their respective countries, and believed to have been hiding across the frontiers.

BDR handed over a list of 63 criminals while BSF gave a list of

At the press briefing, the BSF chief said they are taking steps to reduce incidents of shooting along the borders. "We are trying our best to minimise the problems and bring down the number of deaths...We have no desire to kill people," he said. Srivastava expressed con-

cern over drug peddling, women and children trafficking and arms smuggling across the frontiers. Terming the just concluded

conference a success, the BSF chief, who led a 20-member delegation, said it would increase cooperation between border security personnel of the two neighbouring countries. He urged journalists in Bangladesh to use the word

'death' instead 'killing' while reporting incidents of shooting in the bordering areas. On the BSF proposal to impose night curfew along the Bangladesh border, the BDR

chief said it is not possible at this point of time. Rafigul Islam, who headed a 22-member delegation, however said restrictions on movement along the border have

Both the sides agreed to strengthen border patrol and exchange information to check cross-border crimes.

unpleasant incidents.

already been imposed to avert

The BSF chief said the two sides agreed that the issue of exchange of adversely possessed land could be resolved by the Joint Border Working Group. It met in 2006 and its next meeting will be held in November this year.

Srivastava said, "We are going back with positive impression and this meeting will remain a landmark."

Rafigul Islam said the outcome of the conference is satisfactory.

EC ready

The meeting discussed the

next course of action to this About the significance of the HC's stay order, Sohul said

the order means the AL leader retains his membership and can join the parliament session now. The HC on Sunday also issued a rule asking the EC to

explain within three weeks why its gazette notification should not be declared illegal. The commission had

cancelled Alamgir's candidature for the December 29 parliamentary election as he was convicted and sentenced to 13 years in prison in a graft

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court on July 15 upheld an HC order that had declared legal the EC's decision to cancel Alamgir's candidature. The EC on September 22

declared the seat vacant following the SC verdict.

Right to Know

The Forum formed a human chain in front of the National Press Club yesterday morning on the eve of the International Right to Know Day and made the demands.

Around the world September 28 is celebrated as the International Right to Know Day to raise awareness about the right to information.

Mentioning that organisaism in all its forms, the PM said tions have the tendency to conceal information Convener of RTI Forum attempts on her life she never Shaheen Anam said we should get rid of such culture and let terror. "Terrorism won't be people know the information.

As a result, the free flow of information would be ensured and people will get necessary information, she added.

Many organisations are yet to appoint or reveal the name of officer responsible for divulging information at the upazila level. The Forum asked to take necessary steps to appoint officials and reveal their names immediately.

According to Right To Information (RTI) Act-2009, both government and nongovernment institutions are obliged to disclose and provide information of their activities and services. The government should

take initiatives to make the organisations give information, the Forum said. The annual report of

Information Commission should be published and discussed in the parliament, it demanded. The union parishad should

be involved to implement RTI Act at the grassroots level, RTI Forum observed.

Day today.

Various organisations have chalked out elaborative programmes including human chain, procession, cartoon exhibition, seminar, view-exchange meeting, and information fair to observe the International Right to Know

Afghan poll body orders vote recounts in 7 provinces

REUTERS, Kabul

Afghanistan's election body has ordered a partial recount of votes from seven of the country's 34 provinces on suspicion of fraud, potentially delaying the results of a parliamentary poll further, an official said vesterday.

The Independent Election Commission (IEC) may also push for the recount of ballots in other provinces after the September 18 ballot, which was hit by widespread allegations of fraud.

"We have obtained evidences which show that the results were suspicious and ordered a recount," Zekriya Barakzai, a commissioner for the government-appointed IEC, told Reuters.

Barakzai said the commission had also declared invalid all votes cast in five polling stations in eastern Khost prov-

relatively smoothly despite a Taliban threat to disrupt the poll, although hundreds of polling centers were unable to open because of poor security and thousands of complaints have been lodged. Results of the election are

being closely watched in Washington ahead of U.S. President Barack Obama's planned war strategy review in December, which is expected to examine the pace and scale of U.S. troop withdrawals after nine years of war. A flawed poll could also

weigh on Obama when his administration faces mid-term Congressional elections in November amid sagging public support for the war, with violence at its worst since the Taliban were ousted in 2001.

President Hamid Karzai's credibility with ordinary Afghans and his Western backers is also at stake, with the

BNP questions

FROM PAGE 1

He urged the administration officials to work impartially and not to bow down to any pressure. "People expect the administration to work neutrally in the

interests of the country, and it is also their [officials] constitutional responsibility," he said reading out a statement. The ruling party men have dared to attack local admin

officials because this government has been inactive, he observed. Anwar also alleged Sheikh

Hasina wants to run the counry in Baksal style. "If the very administration

is under attack, how will it help people?" he asked. The army has been weak-

ened and BDR destroyed, and now the government is out to sap the administration too, the former minister said. Whenever officials protest

unlawful activities they are branded as BNP-Jamaat men. Replying to a query, Anwar

said people are being subjected to unnecessary load-shedding so the government can have a pretext to give the party faithful huge work of power generation without tender. "We will look into every-

thing once we are voted back to power." BNP chairperson's advisers

Abdul Quayum, ASM Abdul Halim and Zahirul Islam, among others, were present at the briefing.

memory of his fraud-riddled 2009 re-election still fresh and allegations of graft in his government creating tension at home and abroad.

Barakzai said an investigation had been launched to determine who was involved in the possible vote fraud in the seven provinces -- Kunduz, Balkh, Takhar, Badakhshan and Parwan provinces in the north and northeast, Logar to the south of Kabul and Khost in the east.

The final results, originally set to be declared on October 30, may face more delays because of the recount, Barakzai said.

As of last week, the U.N.backed Electoral Complaints Commission had received about 3,000 formal complaints about the parliamentary poll before and after the vote, and fears the number may double.

The election passed off cials for staging a vote in the

the scale that marred last year's presidential poll. Attacks, however, were more widespread than last year. Both President Hamid Karzai and the top U.N. diplo-

to describe the poll as a success. UN chief

disappointed with Israel over settlements

AFP, United Nations

moon yesterday expressed disappointment at Israel's refusal to extend a halt to new

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-

at what he called "provocative actions" -- a veiled reference to Israel's resumption of settlement building after its moratorium ended on Sunday.

recalls the Quartet statement of last week which reflected the united call of the international community urging Israel to extend the settlement restraint policy," said a statement released by Ban's

spokesman. "He is disappointed that no such decision has yet been taken and concerned at provocative actions taking place

man said in a statement. Settlement building resumed across the West Bank on yesterday, just hours after a 10-month freeze expired, but the Palestinian leadership has held back on a threat to quit

Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad, State Minister for Cultural Affairs Promod Mankin and Information Secretary Dr Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury expressed

elderly patient, who was too weak to walk, for an X-ray holding his arms. Asked why they were not

any trolley or wheel chair to shift the patient. "When I inquired a staff about this, he replied that the

added the NHRC chief.

A tendency of shifting responsibility on each other staffs was also evident.

offered to the patients, once a good management is ensured. Patients complained about the rare ward visit by the

The NHRC will forward a

Afghan and foreign observers have praised election offi-

middle of a violent insurgency. At least 17 people died in attacks across the country but there were no major incidents in Afghanistan's big cities on

mat in Afghanistan, Staffan de Mistura, have said it is too early

settlements in Palestinian territories, a spokesman said. Ban also expressed concern

"The secretary general

on the ground," the spokes-

peace talks with Israel over the

Film actor

FROM PAGE 16

deep shock at his death.

They prayed for salvation of the departed soul and conveyed their deep sympathy to the bereaved family members.

Hospital not fit

FROM PAGE 16

Relatives were moving an

using a trolley or wheel chair, they replied that they were unaware of the service. Attendants of a patient at the 'Model Ward' did not find

patient did not ask for it,

The team wondered if the scenario of a model ward appears like this, what might be the condition of other wards.

among the junior doctors, ward boys, nurses and other Prof Mizanur observed that there are limitations of space

and other logistics, but a better service can still be

senior professors. They also lamented the poor quality of

food served to them during lunch and dinner. The team saw the child ward and emergency section

serving better. "The child ward is better managed although I found three children sharing a single bed and the emergency unit is much cleaner than before,

added NHRC chief. About the medicine service, he said the names of medicines are printed in English and there is no instruction about which medicine is available for free

from outside. Admitting all the limitations, DMCH director assured the visiting team of trying hard to improve the service. The concerned govern-

or which has to be bought

ment departments should closely monitor the present state of the hospital and take steps accordingly, suggested Prof Mizanur, adding "The authorities must ensure that common people are not deprived of good treatment."

set of concrete recommendations to the health ministry for resolving the prevailing crises at the hospital.