No polls without caretaker

FROM PAGE 1

districts to press home the demand for reinstatement of the caretaker system.

"The government must quit forthwith and let a general election be held under a non-party caretaker government. A neutral election commission will have to be formed through discussions to ensure free and fair polls," she said as thousands of opposition activists in front of the BNP headquarters at Naya Paltan roared their approval.

In July, parliament passed the 15th amendment to the constitution to abolish the caretaker government system and allow general election under elected govern-

BNP alleged the constitutional changes are meant to make sure the Awami League-led alliance stay in power forever.

In her speech yesterday, Khaleda made a raft of pledges, which she said, will be implemented once her party is voted back to power. "We will ensure good governance and resist corruption; power generation will get the highest priority; the judiciary will be neutral and independent; and the constitution will be amended to implement people's will."

The leader of the opposition was scathing about the AL-led coalition. "Democracy is being crushed under police boots. The judiciary, police and civil administration have been politicised. A state cannot function this way. We must get rid of this situation by ousting this government through a mass uprising." Slamming the govern-

ment's foreign policy and the treaties signed with India, she said, "None of the deals can be implemented if people deem those unacceptable. We want friendly relations with India but not at the expense of national interests.' Activists of the alliance--

BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami Oikya Jote (Amini faction) and Bangladesh Jatiya Party--started streaming into Naya Paltan and spilled over to adjacent areas long before the programme began around 3:00pm. They carried colourful banners, festoons, placards and portraits of BNP founder late president Ziaur Rahman, Khaleda and Senior Vice-President Tarique Rahman.

slogans, the BNP chief arrived at the venue at nextday.

Wasa warned

severe noise pollution with a

powerful electric generator

executive engineer and

project director of the Water

and Sewerage Authority

(Wasa) and ordered reme-

dial measures to stop the

They were also instructed

The one-megawatt gen-

erator, set up at Wasa's

Lalmatia office, has been

creating noise pollution

since mid September mak-

ing locals' life miserable,

said Mohammad Munir

Chowdhury, director of DoE.

elderly people have so far

been admitted to hospital

having complaints in heart,

More than a hundred

affected locals in a written

complaint said that chil-

dren, ailing and elderly

people have been the worst

affected due to unbearable

noise of the generator, he

Though the permissible

In the event of failure to

stop the nuisance, the gen-

erator would be seized and

fine realised, said

Mostafizur Rahman,

executive engineer, and

Baharul Islam, project direc-

tor of Wasa, admitted to the

noise level in the locality is

noise at 80 decibel.

Chowdhury.

pollution.

noise, he said.

Around 11 children and

not to operate the generator

nuisance within a month.

during the night.

DoE also summoned

in the capital's Lalmatia.

FROM PAGE 20

3:40pm. From the podium, she waved to the cheering crowds.

Huge contingents of Rapid Action Battalion and police were deployed in and around the venue to maintain law and order.

Apart from the alliance components, Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh, Liberal Democratic Party and Kalyan Party took part in the gathering.

Starting at 5:05pm, Khaleda spoke for over an hour. The former prime minister said political governments in the past could not hold fair elections and will not be able to do so in future as well.

She alleged the government is using Rab and police as party cadres and called upon the foreign agencies to stop providing the two forces with training facilities and UN mission jobs.

Accusing the AL-led grand alliance government of persecuting the opposition, she said, "They don't know they cannot cling to power by means of torture.' People have been suffer-

hike in prices of essentials and fuels, she continued. While the finance minister is going from door to door for aids to support the ailing economy, the prime minister is abroad with a

huge delegation promoting

world peace, Khaleda

ing because of outrageous

observed. The government has established a haven for looters where the ruling party high-ups are scooping money out of the capital market, she continued.

The BNP chief demanded the release of all detained opposition leaders including those of Jamaat.

Terming the war crimes tribunal partisan, she said nobody will accept any trial under it. "The government is not allowing Jamaat to hold rallies. Is it a banned organisation? Start from your own party men if you really want to try the war criminals."

She said, "A provision for referendum and 'faith in Almighty Allah' must be restored in the constitu-

The rally was chaired by BNP leader and Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka.

AGITATION PLANS

The opposition leader said they will stage a road march towards Sylhet from Dhaka Greeted by chants of on October 10 and hold a public meeting there the

A march towards Rajshahi and a rally in Bogra will be arranged on October 18 and another rally in Rajshahi the following day.

The party will conduct a road march towards Chittagong and stage a rally in Feni on October 25. A rally in Chittagong will be held the next day.

2G SCAM CBI refuses to probe Chidambara

IANS, New Delhi

m's role

The CBI yesterday objected to the central government telling the Supreme Court that it will examine documents given by Janata Party chief Subramanian Swamy indicating that Home Minister P Chidambaram, as the then finance minister, was also involved in fixing the 2G spec-

Swamy is seeking a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe against Chidambaram alleging that the spectrum price was not decided by jailed former communications minister A. Raja alone but was jointly fixed by the

Militant attack in Philippines kills six

AFP, Manila

Muslim militants attacked a remote village on a strifetorn island in the southern Philippines yesterday and killed six people, the army

One soldier, a progovernment militiaman and four residents of the isolated village on Basilan island died in the raid that was carried out by the Abu Sayyaf group, said local military chief Colonel Alex Macario.

Five residents of the mainly Muslim populated town were also wounded, he

Macario said he did not yet know why the militants attacked. A police report said it was the result of a "long-standing family feud", but did not elaborate.

Basilan is regarded as one of the main strongholds for the Abu Sayyaf, a small gang of Islamic militants founded in the 1990s with the help of Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda network.

Same old Osman his Narayanganj residence.

criminals during the last AL

regime. His two rivals in the upcoming poll Selina Hayat

Ivy, a vice president of the town unit AL, and BNP District Unit President Taimur Alam Khandoker have a number of allegations against him, but it seems that they are also afraid to speak against him.

Some top ranking BNP leaders of the city spoke against "his" illegal activities without mentioning his name. When asked who they mean by "he", they said everybody knows who that person is.

Being frightened, both electoral rivals of Shamim demanded deployment of the army and a reshuffle in brain and ear caused by the the civil administration and police prior to the Narayanganj City Corporation poll due on October 30.

> "We thought he would change himself after returning home from hiding. But we have been proven wrong," a local resident told The Daily Star on Monday preferring not to be named.

55 decibel, DoE officials Criminals are still surfound the generator created | rounding the controversial leader, he added.

> Giving the example of a recent incident where Shamim threatened to harm ruling party lawmaker of the district Sarah Begum Kabori -- Taimur said when a lawmaker is threatened at a law and order meeting in front of the deputy commissioner and high police and civil officials, how could people be safe from that person.

> > "I don't want to mention

complaint and said in a written undertaking to the DoE director that they would immediately take remedial measures to control noise his name. Everybody knows him," the BNP leader said in

Ivy, the immediate past mayor of the now defunct Narayanganj municipality, said Shamim Osman i manoeuvring to make i difficult for her to contest in the mayoral poll.

"He is using the administration to do whatever he feels necessary against me, she alleged. As an example she talked about an incident when her media briefing at Narayanganj Press Club was suddenly foiled by police.

She said she believes Shamim was behind the incident and many others like that.

Asked about the allegations, Shamim Osman yesterday said, "If there is any allegation against me, I will definitely correct myself. But I don't have any allegation against anybody." He termed the allegations against him "antiquated".

"How many times we will speak about the past? Let's move forward and work together for the betterment of the people of Narayanganj and create an example for all," he said adding that the overall atmosphere in the city is fine.

Shamim Osman returned to Narayanganj in April 2009 after around eight years' of self-exile. He fled to India and then to Canada after AL's poll debacle in 2001 national election. He returned home once before in 2006 but after a brief stay left the country again before the 1/11 political changeover in 2007.

Shamim was accused in a number of criminal cases, but the proceedings of all the cases against him were stayed by the High Court.

Aug 21 attack

FROM PAGE 20

Tribunal-1 passed the order after lawyers of 11 accused, including Jamaate-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed and former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar, submitted separate petitions seeking adjournment of the hearing.

lawyers pleaded for time saying they had not yet received the necessary documents of the cases. Thirty-two accused

In the petitions, the

including Mojaheed and Babar, who are now behind bars, were produced before the tribunal.

Dhaka City Corporation ward councillor Ariful Islam Arif, now on bail, was present in the court. Meantime, Harkatul

Jihad chief Mufti Abdul Hannan yesterday submitted a petition for withdrawal of his confessional statement given on April 7 this year saying that he was tortured to give it.

Nuruddin of the tribunal, however, did not pass any order on the petition.

The same court on September 21 adjourned until yesterday the hearing after lawyers of 11 other accused including former inspectors general of police sought adjournment of the hearing. Criminal Investigation

Department submitted the supplementary charge sheets on July 3 mentioning 30 names in addition to the 22 accused in the main charge sheets. Twenty-four people

were killed and around 200 others injured in the grisly grenade attack on an Awami League rally at Bangabandhu Avenue on August 21 in 2004.

The then opposition leader Sheikh Hasina narrowly escaped the attack.

Police filed two cases -one under the Explosive Substances Act, 1908 and the other for killing people -- in this connection.

11 robbers held

of Hathazari Police Station, police sources said.

FROM PAGE 20

Acting on a tip-off that a gang of criminals were preparing to commit a robbery at Pashchim Dholoi village of the upazila, a team of police led by the ASP and Hathazari Police Station Officer-in-charge Saimul Alam raided the village at 2:45am, said Babul.

The gunfight began when the robbers opened fire sensing the presence of the law enforcers, prompting police to retaliate, the ASP said.

During the one-hour gunfight, nearly 50 rounds of bullets were exchanged.

The law enforcers managed to catch the 11 robbers while the gang was trying to retreat from the scene sensing defeat.

Police also recovered 24 rounds of bullets, 10 machetes and six mobile phone sets from their possession.

The three injured robbers are Kawsar, 25, the gang leader, of Jangal Latifpur under Sitakunda; Jamal, 28, of Rangunia; and Shahin, 32, of Bhola were admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

Other arrestees are identified as Najmul Khan, 22, of Hathazari; Mohiuddin, 25, Mohammad Mia, 28, and Alam, 20 of Sitakunda; Belal, 22 and Monir Uddin, 21, of Sandwip; Nirob, 22 of Noakhali; and Nazrul, 32 of Rangunia.

said the OC.

added.

again. OC Saimul Alam said all the arrestees are members of an inter-district robber gang, and they were involved in robberies at different areas of the division including Chittagong, Sandwip, Comilla and Noakhali. They are also accused in several robbery leave the country. cases filed with different police stations including US diplomatic dispatch sent Mirsarai, Sitakunda, Sandwip, and Rangunia,

to Washington described how Khaleda marginalised pro-reform leaders and Police were interrogatpromoted her loyalists, ing the arrestees while using BNP's national counfiling of a case in this concil held on December 8, nection was underway, he 2009.

Victim of cheap politics Former chief justice

FROM PAGE 1

Special Medical Attendance Rules, except that he and the members of his family shall be entitled to medical treatment at the residence of the judge; and such medical facilities shall continue to be admissible after the judge has retired or otherwise ceased to hold office," says the ordinance. The government can

provide an SC judge with any amount for his or her treatment at home or abroad, according to Rule 12 of Special Medical Attendance Rules 1950. It says, "Nothing in these

rules shall be construed as preventing the government from granting to any person to whom they apply any concession relating to medical treatment or attendance which is not authorized by the rules." A law ministry docu-

ment shows that 29 SC judges including five for-But Judge Shahed | mer chief justices were given nearly Tk 2.66 crore for treatment during their tenures from 1999 up to He said all judges

> including Khairul Haque were given money from the prime minister's fund for welfare purpose. SC officials said most judges do not know from

> which fund the government had given them money for treatment. Different sections and political parties including

> the main opposition recently criticised giving money to some judges from the prime minister's welfare and relief fund for treatment. Pro-BNP lawyers came

> down hard on former chief justice Khairul for taking money from the prime minister's fund.

Mohammad Fazlul Karim told The Daily Star that he was given Tk 2 lakh for his treatment in 2002 although he submitted a medical bill of Tk 4.5 lakh for treatment in an Indian hospital.

"I do not know from which fund the government had given me the money. A few newspapers wrongly reported that I was given more than Tk 3 lakh," he said. Of the 29 judges, 25 were given money from the law

ministry's fund after they received treatment. The rest were paid from the prime minister's fund before they got treatment, said an SC official requesting anonymity. A law ministry high-up said the judges were given the money after the prime

minister had approved their medical bills sent to the prime minister's office with the law ministry's recommendations. The bills were submitted to the ministry with necessary documents through

the SC registrar's office with the chief justice's consent, he said. The official said the prime minister can provide money to anyone from the relief and welfare fund for

treatment or any other

welfare purposes. Asking not to be named, a judicial official said lower court judges get a maximum of Tk 10,000 each for treatment from the government's benevolent fund. They can also get large amounts from the prime minister's fund for treatment.

former chief justice said the government should make clear from which fund it disburses money for treatment of judges and

Preferring anonymity, a

"[Khaleda] Zia used the

National Council to consoli-

date her family's grip over

the party, elevating her son

standing committee to 19

persons, rewarding loyalists

and party hardliners while

snubbing erstwhile reform-

Washington on December

20, 2009 said the party coun-

cillors voted to appoint

Tarique to the newly created

ment, [Tarique] Rahman will

join the BNP Standing

Committee and be responsi-

ble for leading the party in

his mother's absence,"

Nicholas Dean, charge

d'affaires of the US embassy

in Dhaka, wrote in the cable.

appearance at the council

via a video taped message

the Council and selection as

Khaleda's deputy/heir

apparent represents a set-

back for reform efforts

The cable said Dhaka City

Corporation Mayoral candi-

date and BNP partisan

Abdul Awal Mintoo told

embassy's political counsel-

lor that Tarique remained

bitter about his situation

and claimed he was not

noted that Rahman's

[Tarique] wife was unhappy

with his appointment and

had been trying to convince

him to leave politics since

the family left Bangladesh,'

said the cable.

"Other BNP insiders

eager to return home.

within the BNP," he said.

from London.

Tarique made a cameo

"Tarique's appearance at

"By virtue of this appoint-

The cable sent to

their family members.

He said the government could easily make arrangements with Jiban Bima Corporation, a state-run insurance company, for treatment of judges and their family members.

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed refused to comment on providing money to four judges from the prime minister's fund.

"I am not aware of the distinction between the government funds from which the judges were given money for treatment," he said. SC officials said justice

Khairul did not personally ask for money from the prime minister's fund for his wife's treatment. Rather, it was the law ministry that managed the financial assistance after the SC sent a letter to the ministry. The law ministry docu-

ment shows former chief justice Latifur Rahman received Tk 3.45 lakh, MM Ruhul Amin got Tk 21.15 lakh, Md Tafazzul Islam received Tk 15.70 lakh and Mohammad Fazlul Karim took Tk 3.69 lakh from the law ministry's fund.

Appellate Division judges SK Sinha and Md Shamsul Huda, its former judges Abdul Aziz and Shah Abu Nayeem Mominur Rahman, and some High Court judges also received money from the same fund Four judges -- Khairul

Haque, Kazi Ebadul Hoque NK Chakraborty and SK Sinha -- were given money from the PM's relief and welfare fund. Justices Khairul and

Sinha received money from both the law ministry and the prime minister's funds for treatment, according to the document.

'Khaleda alone'

FROM PAGE 20

US ambassador James F Moriarty at her new office in Gulshan area, the cable said. She was joined by three of her top advisers including the then secretary general of BNP Khandaker Delwar Hossain.

Delwar was consistently demanding numerous concessions from the caretaker government as preconditions for BNP's participation in the elections. "Although she [Khaleda]

earlier told the Embassy political specialist she had instructed Delwar to tone down his rhetoric, he unremittingly voiced a hard-line stance.

"Once Delwar and the other aides left the meeting [on October 13, 2008], however, she assured the Ambassador that she and she alone would steer the party into the future, Moriarty wrote in the cable.

The meeting lasted nearly 90 minutes, including a short tête-à-tête without any aides, in which Moriarty stressed the important role Khaleda and her party would play in Bangladesh's future, reads the dispatch.

Throughout the meeting in her sparsely furnished office, Khaleda appeared in her element, sometimes sitting leaning back with her hands folded over her chest and her eyes narrowed as she listened intently; sometimes breaking into laughter as she spoke in short bursts of English and lengthier discourses in Bangla that her aides translated, it adds.

Khaleda not only steered BNP into the December 29, 2008 polls, but also consolidated her grip over the party Her political fate had

"While the decision to been uncertain as some of her party's senior leaders had moved to minus her such a high position may not from BNP in support of be surprising, it represents a serious blow to reform some DGFI officials when she was in jail during the efforts in BNP and could tenure of army-backed presage a more confrontacaretaker regime. Even she tional approach by the oppowas reportedly agreed to sition. About formation of After over a year, another

national standing committee, the cable said Khaleda announced her selections for the committee in the council.

immediate aftermath of the It said members of BNP's reformist faction, which sought to replace Khaleda

during the caretaker government regime, were notably absent from the list of those selected while several Khaleda loyalists and BNP

then US ambassador in loyalists in her government. Citing Bangladesh gov-

"Loyalty, proximity, and

length of service to PM [Khaleda] Zia still count for far more than title or institutional position, but for Zia loyalty is a two-way street. Many insiders have a close relationship with her son and heir apparent, Tarique Rahman," it said.

Medicare

"We were out of water since morning. I had to climb down to the ground floor twice for water and medicine," said Billal Hossain, an attendant of a patient at Intensive Care

Patients and their relatives waited in queues for pathological tests in vain. Some did not get their operation schedules as the required tests were not done.

doctors tried to provide outdoor service by candle-"It's impossible to exam-

elevate Tarique Rahman to ine cancer patients by candlelight," said Fahmida Nazir, an outdoor medical officer. "Many have come from outside Dhaka. They cannot travel every day."

> Many outdoor patients left without taking treatment. When the power supply resumed in the afternoon, scores crowded at different

North

AFP, Seoul

South Korea's ruling party chief said yesterday he would visit North Korea this week to try to ease 18 months of high crossborder tensions.

S Korea party

chief to visit

Hong Joon-Pyo, leader of the conservative Grand National Party (GNP), said he proposed his trip to a jointly-run factory estate at Kaesong this Friday "because inter-Korean relations should not remain strained further".

The South's unification ministry, which must authorise all cross-border contacts, said it had held talks with the North to arrange the one-day trip.

Hong told reporters he had no plans to meet the North's officials. But the one-day visit will

be the highest-level political exchange since relations went into deep freeze last year, after two deadly attacks which Seoul blamed on its neighbour.

Car blast kills 5 near Afghan police HQ AFP, Lashkar Gah

A suicide car bombing killed five people and wounded two dozen others near a police headquarters in southern Afghanistan yesterday, officials said. Mohammad Rasoul, a

spokesman for the Afghan

army, said three police were killed and three others wounded in the blast in Lashkar Gah, capital of troubled Helmand province. Enavatullah Ghafari, public health director in

the province, told AFP that two dead civilians were also brought to local hospi-Some 25 other people, both police and civilians,

were also wounded, he said. No one claimed respon-

sibility of the attack yet. There have been a string of attacks in Lashkar Gah since British troops formally handed control of security in the area to the Afghan army on July 20, including a suicide car bomb attack on police headquarters which killed

Rally causes

FROM PAGE 1

13 people.

of vehicles on these streets in the afternoon. Processions by opposition activists from different parts of the city made the situation even worse.

Police halted the movement

Schoolchildren, patients and their attendants and service holders ran into troubles due to tailbacks.

"I took a bus from Motijheel around 10:00am for Birdem Hospital, but police stopped it near Paltan. Failing to take any vehicle, my granddaughter and I started walking under the scorching sun," Nobir Hossain told The Daily Star.

A large number of buses and minibuses carried people to the meeting venue. This significantly cut down the number of public transports on city streets resulting in sufferings for the commuters, pointed out drivers and transport work-

BNP sought permission to hold the rally at city's Paltan Maidan, but the government did not allow it.

Monirul Islam, who

no traffic jam at Motijheel,

Paltan, Jatiya Press Club,

came from Barisal to attend the rally, said people would have suffered less, if the government had allowed BNP to use the Paltan Maidan. Interestingly, there was

Shahbagh, Nilkhet, Moghbazar, Saatrasta, Banglamotor and Farmgate intersections around 6:15pm. "Commuters and private

cars avoided the areas adjacent to the rally venue from noon. That's why movement of vehicles on roads became thin by evening," mentioned bus driver

Tarique Rahman to the new hardliners were elevated to post of Senior Vice the party's highest decision Chairman," the cable said adding that Khaleda making body. Over four years ago the expanded the national

Dhaka Harry K Thomas in a cable to Washington on May 11, 2005 described how the then prime minister Khaleda Zia favoured her

ernment's dysfunctional decision-making process and its control by a handfu of individuals, the cable said not much has changed since

FROM PAGE 20 inoperative.

Unit on the ninth floor.

Earlier in the morning,

The outdoor of the hospital is near the parking lot.

points to get treatment. The BSMMU director

said they are planning to add more generators to provide service in such situations.

Abdus Sattar.