FROM PAGE 20

He said the affected areas

needed clean drinking

water, restored power, and

children back in school. "I

discussed all of those issues

today with the president and

I'm pleased to report that he

has sprung into action imme-

diately to help get us those

things while we were in the

Obama has suspended

campaign events since

Sunday while overseeing

federal relief efforts and

holding public events to

show Americans he is

focused on handling a major

natural disaster instead of

pressing his quest for a sec-

He returned the praise

from Christie, seen by some

Republicans as a potential

presidential candidate in

throughout this process, has

been responsive, he has

been aggressive in making

sure that the state got out in

front of this incredible

storm," Obama said, calling

the Republican's leadership

electricity was a top priority,

we will not forget, we will

follow up to make sure you

get all the help you need

Leaving Republican

presidential candidate

Romney on the sidelines

holding campaign events in

Florida in which he had to

pull his punches and barely

featured on TV, Obama trav-

elled to Atlantic City in New

Jersey to get an aerial view of

the widespread damage

offering solace to New Jersey

residents who had lost their

home could be of incalcula-

ble political value in the final

few days of the 2012 presi-

that your governor is work-

ing overtime,' President

Obama told victims at an

emergency shelter after the

tour. "The entire country has

been watching what's been

happening. Everybody

knows how hard Jersey has

Governor Christie said:

"It's really important to have

the president of the United

States here." President

Obama returned the compli-

came as people in the

heavily populated US East

Coast corridor battered by

Sandy took the first cautious

steps to reclaim their

upended daily routines, even

as rescuers combed neigh-

bourhoods strewn with

debris and scarred by floods

has publicly endorsed

Romney, said: "I want to

thank the president for

coming here today (Wednes-

day). It's really important to

have the president of the

United States acknowledge

all the suffering that's going

on here in New Jersey and I

The president returned

the kind words, telling the

crowds of beleaguered New

Jersey residents who had

gathered that their

Republican governor was

"working overtime to make

sure that as soon as possible

everybody can get back to

a vocal supporter of GOP

nominee Romney, has

changed his partisan tune

after the storm, regularly

singing President Obama's

praises in relation to the

federal aid given toward

Governor Christie, who is

normal".

appreciate it very much."

Governor Christie, who

The politicians' meeting

"I want to let you know

The images of Obama

caused by the storm.

dential campaign.

been hit."

ment.

and fire.

until you rebuild," he said.

Obama said restoring

"We are here for you and

"extraordinary."

reports Reuters.

"Governor Christie,

ond term.

2016.

car riding together."

Police start counting ammo at all units

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bullets and cartridges seized recently from the possession of five policemen were made in the Bangladesh Ordnance Factory, confirmed Monirul Islam, deputy commissioner of DB (south), yesterday.

Police suspected the bullets might have been stolen from the armoury at Rajarbagh Police Lines by employing a devious tactic.

Meanwhile, the police yesterday launched a special counting of its arms and ammunition at all units across the country.

"Usually the counting is conducted on a monthly basis. But after the incident, I have ordered all the units to count their arms and ammunition and submit their reports immediately," said AKM Shahidul Hoque, additional inspector general of

Detective Branch (DB) of police on October 25 arrested naveks Jannal Chakma and Prem Chakma of Public Order Management unit of police with 500 bullets in their possession.

According to the information gleaned from the detainees, the DB on October 28 arrested constable Mohammad Masud Miah of Rajarbagh Police Lines armoury and Subinspector Mohammad Zahid Hossain and constable Abu Sayem of the police lines with 1,103 bullets, 2,415 cartridges and a revolver in their posses-

Jannal and Prem were members of the outlawed guerrilla group "Shanti Bahini" in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

After the signing of the CHT peace accord on December 2, 1997, the two had surrendered their arms and joined the police department the following

Hanif sees no significance in Khaleda's India visit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling Awami League (AL) Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif yesterday said his party saw nothing significant in opposition leader Khaleda Zia's visit to

'The visit is a normal event as the two neighbouring countries enjoy friendly relations. We don't want to mean it (visit) more than that," he told a press briefing at the party's Dhanmondi office in the capital following Chinese Ambassador in Dhaka Li Jun's visit there.

Referring to the recent visits of Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad and AL General Secretary Syed Ashraful Islam to India, Hanif said the Indian government had invited the leaders of different political parties in Bangladesh to strengthen its relations with the parties, and the BNP chairperson's visit was also a part of the process.

On BNP's threat of waging tougher movements, he said the ruling party was no worried about it as the opposition has been issuing such warnings since the AL-led grand alliance assumed office in 2009. "As people are not with them [BNP], all of their programmes have

ship and cooperation

between the CPC and AL.

The delegation had been in

gifts and hoped that the bilat-

eral relations between the two

The AL leaders thanked the

Dhaka recently.

ahead.

disaster relief support. "The president has been failed." outstanding in this and so The Chinese ambassador have the folks at FEMA (the on behalf of a high-level dele-Federal Emergency gation of the Communist Management Agency), Party of China handed over Governor Christie told the some electronics goods to AL Today Show on Tuesday. leaders as a token of strengthening the friend-

Governor Christie later told news anchor Soledad O'Brien that President Obama "has been incredibly supportive and helpful to our state, and not once did he bring up the elec-Chinese ambassador for the tion."

> Christie continued his new tact of effusively praising President Obama and the work that the federal government is doing in response to the hurricane, saying that the two spent a

countries and parties would improve further in the days AL General Secretary Syed Ashraful Islam and presidium member Mohiuddin Khan "significant" afternoon Alamgir were present at the together touring the Jersey press briefing, among others. Shore in Marine One.

Sandy may prove

The governor said that the two have put their partisan differences aside and had spoken six times including their afternoon-long trip, reports Mail Online. "It has been a great work-

ing relationship to make sure that we are doing the jobs that the people elected us to do," Governor Christie said of President Obama. " am pleased to report that he has sprung into action immediately while we were in the car together."

The president was slightly more reserved with his praise, as he kept the majority of his remarks focused on the efforts of FEMA and ways for those who lost homes from the storm rather than his political rival.

"Governor Christie has been responsive aggressive, making sure the state got out in front of this incredible storm," Obama said.

During his introduction, Governor Christie, known for his brash demeanour, said he forgave residents of Brigantine for not following his order to "get the hell out before the storm hit Monday night. (He jokingly said "you're forgiven this time.")

Obama made a reference to the colourful language, turning back to give the Governor a smile during the remark.

No possibility

FROM PAGE 20 government's decision.

Officials said none of the administrators was removed from the post since their appointment. "And there is no possibility to change any of them as we do not have any record of their performance," the official added.

A senior Election Commission official said the issue of holding polls to zila parishads was not on their agenda as the LGRD ministry had sent them no information to that end.

The prevailing situation is allowing the administrators to remain in office for an indefinite period. This situation has arisen because the Zila Parishad Act, 2000 does not specify the tenure of the administrators. But it arms the government with unfet tered authority to remove any administrator without showing any reason.

Since appointment an administrator has been receiving Tk 27,000 as remuneration and 400 litres of fuel for transport per month.

"If the administrators visit any project areas, they get the actual fuel cost," the LGRD ministry's senior official explained as the ministry did not give any vehicle to them.

"But several of the administrators have purchased vehicles with the money of their respective zila parishads on approval of the LGRD ministry," the official

The way the zila parishads is running, however, runs counter to the

ruling AL's electoral pledges. In the run-up to the ninth parliamentary elections held on December 29, 2009, the AL in its manifesto titled "A Charter for Change' pledged to strengthen zila parishads through decentralisation of power and transform those into centres for implementation of programmes on education, health and other development plans and also for maintenance of law and

But the reality is quite different. In the last four years, the AL did not move to hold polls to the zila

parishads. After appointment of the administrators, LGRD Minister Syed Ashraful Islam on January 22 this year said the government would enac and amend necessary laws during its tenure to ensure that zila parishads are run by elected representatives.

Ashraful, also general secretary of AL, said: "We don't want governmentappointed administrators running the zila parishads [district councils]. Rather, we want elected representatives to run them.'

In his last budget speech in June this year Finance Minister AMA Muhith also made fresh promises to strengthen the local government bodies including zila parishads.

But all promises remain

only on paper.

Focus on growth

Bangladeshi) banks -- in the Indian PM tells new face of political pressure. cabinet members Among those who got the

FROM PAGE 1

Taposh.

approval are former military

ruler and Jatiya Party chief

HM Ershad, Home Minister

Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and

Awami League lawmaker and

Prime Minister Sheikh

Hasina's nephew Fazle Noor

Asked to comment on the

draft act, Krishi Bank

Chairman Khandker Ibrahim

Khaled said it would be "inde-

"It will become a bad pre-

"The law should be equal

cedent of damaging the rule of

for all," added Ibrahim

Khaled, a former deputy

Over the last decade, suc-

cessive governments took a

influential bank owners.

Talking to The Daily Star on

Wednesday, former foreign

minister M Morshed Khan

said the relations between the

BNP and India could not grow

to an expected level due to

tainly marks a change in her

be foolish to bank on anti-

India politics just to please the

country's people, as they very

well understand the impor-

tance of good relations with

politics are gone and it would

be a mistake if anyone still

spondent, at least three BNP

leaders said that two allies --

Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami

Oikya Jote -- some BNP

policymakers and close aides

to the chairperson had con-

vinced Khaleda to take the

mistakes regarding relations

with India, Lt Gen (retd)

Mahbubur Rahman, a BNP

standing committee member,

told The Daily Star at his

Banani DOHS residence on

suing wrong policies, espe-

cially from 2001, when it made

a political alliance with the

Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami

said, "The BNP's new stance

on India reflects the changed

mindset of the party chairper-

son as well as her realisation to

[Jamaat and IOJ] had

Islamised the BNP-led four-

party alliance and with the

support of a section of BNP

policymakers, they convinced

the chairperson to follow an

"The two Islamist parties

The former army chief

"The party had been pur-

The party made various

anti-India position.

Tuesday.

Oikya Jote."

this end."

Speaking to this corre-

maintains that stance."

"Those days of anti-India

"And madam's visit cer-

He also said that it would

"politics of blame game".

mindset regarding India."

FROM PAGE 1

governor of the central bank.

law through enacting a law.

cent" to pass such a law.

AFP, New Delhi

Indian prime minister yesterday urged his reshuffled administration to focus all its efforts on reviving the flagging economy, and said pushing through infrastructure projects would be prioritised.

Manmohan Singh admitted that "growth has decelerated, our exports have fallen and our fiscal deficits are expanding" as he spoke in New Delhi to ministers, including seven new cabinet members brought in on Sunday.

The change of team was seen as an attempt to relaunch Singh's government after years of policy paralysis, worsening economic data and corruption allegations, with the next general elections due in 2014.

"Of particular concern is the fiscal deficit, which is too high and acts as a deterrent for domestic and foreign investment," Singh

Mashiur **FROM PAGE 1**

This correspondent could not reach Mashiur despite repeated attempts.

The adviser had been dropped from several committees, including cabinet committees on economic affairs and purchases, and he would be kept out of these bodies even after his joining, a cabinet division official earlier had said. Meanwhile, the Anti-

Corruption Commission on Monday asked Mashiur to appear before it on November 6 to face questioning in connection with the graft allegations. An external panel of the World Bank earlier had

visited Dhaka to monitor the

ACC enquiries into the alleged corruption in the project. In June, the WB cancelled its \$1.2 billion loan deal citing "corruption conspiracy" in the project. It said the government has to meet three conditions, including

for revival of the agreement. The global lender, however, in September decided to revive its loan, saying all its conditions were met.

sending Mashiur on leave,

Khaleda

FROM PAGE 20 phone the opposition leader and her entourage also prayed for the country's peace and prosperity at the shrine around 1:15pm.

BNP standing committee member Tarigul Islam, chairperson's advisers Reaz Rahman and Sabihuddin Ahmed, vice president Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury, among others, were present.

On Wednesday, Khaleda travelled to Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan state, by road with special security arrangements, and stayed overnight

at Rambagh Palace there. She returned New Delhi

last night. Khaleda left Dhaka for New Delhi on October 28. She is expected to return

home tomorrow. ACC seeks

FROM PAGE 1 official of the BB told The Daily Star.

He added that the banks will be asked to send the information in 10 working days.

The officials, except one, whose information has been asked for, are Chairperson of Hall-Mark Jasmine Islam, its Managing Director Tanvir Mahmud and General Manager Tushar Ahmed; Chairman of DN Sports Ltd Motahar Uddin Chowdhury, its Managing Director Shafiqur Rahman John and Director Fahmida Akhter Chwodhury; Chairman of T and Brothers Zinat Fatema, its Managing Director Touhidul Islam and Director

Jalil Sheikh.

Taslim Hasan; Managing active groups in Al-Badr in Director of Paragon Knit Composite Saiful Hasan Raja; Chairman of Nakshi Knit Composite Amena Begum and its Managing more session on Sunday to Director Abdul Malek;

Chairman of Khan Jahan Ali Sweater Md Tajul Islam and its Managing Director Abdul tribunal to recall the order.

director is Tk 1 crore and number of initiatives to limit maximum Tk 40 crore (10 the number of directors on percent). the board for establishing Seven of the nine new corporate governance and

Govt favours new banks

BNP government, the central

bank issued a circular and

fixed the number at 13. The

BB, however, failed to imple-

has moved to amend the act to

(IMF). The banking division

proposed limiting the num-

ber of directors to 15, includ-

ing the managing director and

approved in 2012 can have 20

directors for the first two

licence a new bank has to

make a mandatory deposit of

Tk 400 crore as paid up capital

and the minimum share

holding stake of a sponsor

But the banks that were

As per rules, for getting the

an independent director.

years, says the draft.

it in the Bank Company Act.

banks applied to the BB for disciplining the board of licences last month. The other directors. But the moves fell two sought more time for flat owing to pressure from submitting the applications. The existing law does not The central bank will try to specify the number of direccomplete scrutiny of the applications by this month, a During the time of the last BB official said.

popular sentiment against

after long years had under-

stood that the anti-India

stance would not do her party

tried to make the party chief

realise the matter but failed as

our opposition in the party

and in the alliance was more

powerful and the party chief

had no alternative but to listen

agenda, some of the

policymakers, including

myself, at several meetings

called upon the party chair-

person to shed the anti-India

stance," Mahbubur recalled.

the party had certainly deteri-

orated over the 10-truck arms

haul during the past BNP-

Jamaat rule in 2004. India

widely considered that the

arms cache had been brought

in for some Indian separatist

the world's largest democracy

deteriorated further after the

August 21 grenade attack on

an Awami League rally in

Senior Vice-Chairman

Tarique Rahman's various

controversial activities when

the party was in power in

realise that the party has to be

sincere to resolve all unre-

solved bilateral problems

with India when it takes

also true that the BNP had not

seen a cordial attitude from

ers, the former army chief

along with senior leaders

Tarigul Islam, Moudud

According to party insid-

India either till 2010."

However, he added, "It's

"BNP policymakers now

2001-06," he said.

"And there were BNP

Besides, the BNP's ties with

organisations.

He said his relations with

He declined to go into details.

"Although it was not on the

to the powerful lobby.

"Many of us had earlier

any good.

He said the party chief

It was a 'mistake'

Before applying for the licences, the banks had to make the mandatory deposits and submit relevant docu-

city

ments to the BB. ment it as it could not include On giving licences Ibrahim Khaled said the BB The current government had scrutinised the sponsors' meet some conditions of the eligibility before giving per-International Monetary Fund mission for setting up the banks. If a new sponsor now wants to become a director, the central bank should see whether it would be proper to give licences to these banks.

> The BB official said the bank would send the documents of the new banks to the National Board of Revenue for examining whether the deposit money had been earned illegally. The BB will also see if any of the applicants is a loan defaulter.

If so, the BB will not give a licence to the applicant, the official added.

When the issue of setting up the new banks came up last year, the central bank, the sole authority to approve new banks, was against the move. It said there was no need for more banks with 47 public, private and foreign banks already in operation in the country.

Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury

are among those who played a

vital role to "repair" the party's

Delhi visit this week, M

October 9. But, he said, it was a

personal visit and it had noth

Khaleda Zia.

party of Bangladesh.

parties of Bangladesh and the

people of Bangladesh, not

with any particular party,"

said BNP standing commit-

first time any Indian prime

Zia when she was in opposi-

with India to resolve all out

standing issues with the larg-

Another BNP policymaker,

party and its allies had used

"indecent" language against

India on several occasions,

especially when the party was

in opposition. This attitude

breached Indian trust and

est and powerful neighbour.'

Before Khaleda's New

relations with India.

Bangladeshis in US safe

Says govt 3 days after super storm

UNB, Dhaka

The Bangladeshi expatriates living in Sandi-hit areas of the USA are safe, confirmed the Bangladesh mission in Washington.

"Though the superstorm caused losses to the property of Bangladeshis living in the USA, there is no report of death yet." said a PID handout yesterday quoting the Bangladesh mission.

"All Bangladeshis are unhurt," it said adding that the mission is in touch with the Bangladeshis living in the storm-hit areas. Over 3.75 million people in

US East Coast were still without power as cities and towns started recovering from the wrath of Hurricane Sandy that left New York and New Jersey devastated on October 29.

The death toll from the disaster rose to 70 in the US, including 24 in New York City, 8 in New Jersey and 4 in Connecticut as rescue workers pulled bodies from wreckage across the region.

9 sued for bid to send people to Malaysia STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A man, who survived a

Morshed Khan toured India motorboat capsize in the twice to do the groundwork to Bay of Bengal in the early this end. Even Mosaddek Ali hours of October 28, has sued nine people for trying to send around 130 people illegally to Malaysia. Abu Bakar, one of the six

survivors, filed a case on Wednesday night with Teknaf Police Station in Cox's Bazar. He hails from Deilpara in Teknaf upazila, said Mohammad Farhad officer-in-charge of the police station.

disclose the names of the Pranab Mukherjee played a accused in the case.

country's stance on relations around 30 others boarded a with the main opposition motorboat at Shah Porir Dweep on the Nafriver in the "We have got a clear signal evening of October 27. They of its changed mindset when were heading to the sea, Pranab Babu categorically according to the case statementioned that his country wanted to maintain good Deep in the Bay, they relations with all democratic

boarded a bigger motorboat bound for Malaysia. Around 100 people were already on Around 4.00am on

tee member Moudud He added this was for the minister had invited Khaleda shore but failed, the plaintiff "We have to accept that we

have to have good relations that night. The other passengers went missing, he added. seeking anonymity, said the

> any of the missing people. Hamidur Rahman, chair-

man of Sabrang Union Parishad in Teknaf, told The Daily Star that around 42 of the passengers taking the trip were from five villages under the union.

Khaleda plans FROM PAGE 1

chief could not meet any

high profile political leaders.

'But this time we want her USA and UK visit to be a success," a BNP leader said wishing not to be named. A vice-chairman and an adviser to Khaleda Zia have already started working to this effect, he added.

BNP Vice-Chairman

Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury

and Khaleda's Foreign Affairs Adviser Sabihuddin Ahmed who were in charge of the 2011 tour, failed to arrange meetings with high profile figures like US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and British Prime Minister David Cameron.

BNP leader and former foreign minister M Morshed Khan on Wednesday at his Mohakhali office in Dhaka said Khaleda was working to enhance engagement with important countries.

"And as part of this initiative, she might visit some other countries in Europe, the Middle East and America," he said.

On October 21, the tribunal had fixed yesterday for passing an order but the tribu-

The tribunal did not mention any reason for the

chairman of the tribunal, was not present yesterday. Azad, also known as

Bachchu Razakar, went on the run around seven hours before Tribunal-2 issued an arrest warrant against him on April 3.

On October 7, the same Defence counsel Abdus court decided to hold Azad's trial in absentia.

gave three more days to defence counsel Abdus Sobhan Tarafder to deliver a response in writing as to why he was absent before the tribunal on Wednesday.

more time.

The tribunal on Wednesday directed Sobhan to submit a written reply by yesterday as to why he could not appear before the court.

anti-India stance to exploit Ahmed, M Morshed Khan and confidence in the BNP. Jamaat was Pak army's auxiliary

In their opening statement on June 10, the prosecution had said Ghulam Azam, the then ameer of the East Pakistan Jamaat-e-Islami, was responsible for the crimes committed by the auxiliary forces of the Pakistani army during the Liberation War since he had control and influence over those forces.

Replying to another question, Matiur said, "...Al-Badr force was formed in Sherpur on May 16, 1971, comprising 47 members of Islami Chhatra Sangha."

Defence counsel Mizanul Islam asked whether Matiur knew how the auxiliary forces were formed. "I don't have clear knowl-

edge," Matiur said. In reply to a question the witness said there were three

Dhaka district during the war. International Crimes Tribunal-1 after lunch yesterday gave the defence one

cross-examine Matiur. Defence counsel Tajul Islam, however, urged the

The tribunal did not.

TRIBUNAL-2 International Crimes Tribunal-2 yesterday allowed the defence of Jamaat-e-Islami leader Abdul Quader Mollah half an hour more on Sunday to complete its cross-examination of the investigation officer of the

On Wednesday, the tribunal ordered the defence to complete the crossexamination by yesterday but it gave the additional time as the defence could not complete the job.

Sobhan Tarafder yesterday cross-examined Abdur Razzaque Khan, one of the two investigation officers of the case against Quader Mollah, for the fourth day. The case was filed in con-

nection with crimes against humanity committed during the Liberation War. Tribunal-2 yesterday fixed

November 4 for passing an order on whether to frame charges against expelled Jamaat member Abul Kalam Azad in connection with his alleged involvement in crimes against humanity.

nal yesterday rescheduled the

rescheduling. Justice ATM Fazle Kabir,

Meanwhile, the tribuna

It fixed November 5, after Abdur Razzaq, chief defence counsel of the detained Jamaat leaders, asked for

Falu, a close aide to Khaleda, had gone to India for the same purpose, BNP sources said. Talking to this correspondent at his Mohakhali office on Wednesday, Morshed Khan admitted he had visited India for seven days from

ing to do with the visit of The OC, however, did not Also, Indian President

vital role in changing his Abu Bakar, 22, along with

October 28, the passengers found a crack had developed at the bottom of the motorboat, which was overloaded The helmsman tried to steer the boat to the Myanmar

The six survivors were clinging to some plastic stuff throughout the day before being rescued by a trawler

Lt Badroddoza, Teknaf station commander of Bangladesh Coast Guard said they had no report on