## The Daily Star

# 2 commissioners

assurance that two more commissioners would be appointed in no time, the EC Secretariat on Sunday afternoon sought directives from the commission on the voter roll in light of the High Court's January 4 directives.

After the appointments, officials at the EC secretariat said the CEC, who has been avoiding convening a meeting, is likely to call it in a couple of days as he now has two members on his

Law Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed yesterday termed the prevailing situation in the EC a deadlock.

"The appointments were made to break the deadlock," Moudud told the BBCradiolastnight.

Noted jurist Dr Kamal Hossain said controversial persons have been appointed through a controversial process.

"One of the appointees is highly controversial," he said, hinting at SM Zakaria. Complaints are rife about his activities, Kamal added.

Giving reaction to the BBC Bangla Service yesterday evening, the Gono Forum president also said the appointments seem to have been made ignoring the High Court's January 4 ruling. "It may even be a strategy to deal with the High Court's order," he observed.

After taking oath as the election commissioners, Justice Mahfuzur and Zakaria went to the CEC's residence and talked to him for about 40 minutes. CEC Aziz has been absenting from his office for illness since January 9.

After meeting with the CEC, Zakaria went to the EC in the evening while Mahfuzurreturned home.

About the talks with the CEC, newly appointed election commissioner SM Zakaria told journalists that they went there to enquire about the condition of the CEC. "He [CEC] will join the office in a couple of days. He is now taking reston doctor's advice," he added.

In an oblique reference to the recent statements by Munsef Ali and Mohammad Ali opposing the preparation of a fresh voter list, Zakaria said some unfortunate developments have taken place of late. "These are not fair. Taking any whimsical move centring this institution [EC] is unjust," Zakaria

He however said whatever have been said are 'their' personal opinions.

On the much-awaited EC meeting to decide on the voter list in line with the High Court's directives, Zakaria declined to comment.

Justice Mahfuzur said he did not know anything about the appoint-ment before it was made. "SM Zakaria gave me the news at 12 noon," he told journalists at his residence.

Zakaria who joined as the secretary on April 1, 2002 was given a one-year extension, which was supposed to expire on February 6 this year. The government cancelled the extension on Sunday and appointed him vesterday as the election commissioner.

Despite the cancellation, SM Zakaria yesterday worked as the secre-tary of the EC secretariat till 2:30pm and examined a number of officials files, sources said.

On taking the oath Zakaria sat at the office of the EC secretary and talked to journalists.

Joint Secretary to the EC Secretariat Mohammod Zakoria was given the chargeofacting secretary.

Reacting to the new appointments Election Commissioner Mohammad Ali told reporters that they have nothing to comment if the president has given the appointments Referring to the vacant post followingtheretirement of Safiur Rahman on June 24 last year, Election Commissioner Munsef Ali said the appointments were made as required. Sources said tenure of the incumbent election commissioners Mohammad Ali and Munsef Ali will expire on April 19.

two election commissioners expressed opinions in favour of preparing a voter t for the next parliamentary election and decided to discuss the issue next

But the CEC did not convene any meeting on August 6, and instead forwarded to the election commissioners a file in which he wrote the voter list shall be prepared afresh. The two commissioners gave the opinion that it should be revised.

Ignoring the opinion, the EC Secretariat on orders of the CEC completed all preparation for making a fresh roll and accordingly started the taskon January 1.

Disposing of two writ petitions, the High Court on January 4 asked the EC to revise the existing electoral roll and hold immediately a meeting.

Bypassing the HC orders, the EC Secretariat has been continuing the work of preparing the fresh list while the two election commissioners have repeatedlybeen calling for a meeting.

protested But the CEC has not yet called the meeting mainly because the two election commissioners are united on AP, Cape Canaveral revising the existing list. Even they are against filing an appeal against the HC directives, said sources. More than eight years ago, hundreds of protesters chanted anti-PROFILES

Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassir Husain, who returned from Saudi Arabia after performing Hajj earlier yesterday, administered the oath of office for Justice Mahfuz and Zakaria at his chamber in the Supreme Court afternoon.

Justice Mahfuz is a retired judge of HC. He was appointed to the HC during BNP rule in 1992 and retired in 2000. Later he served as the chairman of the administrative appellate tribunal.

SMZakaria was the immediate past secretary to the EC Secretariat. He joined the post on April 1,2002.

### 14-party

FROM PAGE 1 Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) and the National Awami Party attended yesterday's meeting.

The meeting cancelled the coali-tion's planned march towards the Election Commission Secretariat on anuary 19 and decided to stage demonstrations across the country instead on the same day. In Dhaka, the coalition will hold a rally on the central Shaheed Minar premises, Jalil said.

The meeting also discussed reparations for a rally at Paltan Aaidan in the capital on January 23 and a 'long march' towards Dhaka on February 5 demanding an end to BNP-Jamaat's regime.

The meeting decided to shift a scheduled divisional grand rally to be held in Sylhet to February 1 from nuary31.

Briefing journalists, Jalil said appointments of the two election Abdullah Mahmud Hassan, submitting two separate petitions, told ommissioners are part of the ruling alliance's conspiracy to manipulate the next poll.

Meanwhile, AL's youth front Jubo League will demonstrate across the country today to protest he appointments and hold a rally at Iuktangan in the capital at 3:00pm. "This is unconstitutional and

done with an ill political motive...we don't accept it. We reject the appointments," Jalil said. "The government made SM

### EC Secretariat seeks **Fish trader** killed in city

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT** 

goons appeared at the scene and shot him thrice from a close dis-

Medical College and Hospital where duty doctors declared him

**Pluto mission** 

nuclear slogans before Nasa

launched a spacecraft to Saturn

carrying 72 pounds of plutonium

fuel. The noise before this week's

launch of a craft with a similar

payload has been more muted.

Nuclear Power in Space.

Cassini to Saturn in 1997.

The authorities are trying to trace the owners of the container and the truck.

Sunny shown

FROM PAGE 1

10:00pm.

FROM PAGE 1

anyone in this connection.

Nesar was rushed to the Dhaka

Pallabi police could not arrest

vesterday

tance.

dead

immediately, sources said.

As of yesterday, the CEC has neither convened an immediate Unknown assailants shot dead a fish trader in the city's Pallabi area meeting of the EC nor communi-cated with the two other election The victim, Nesar Ahmed, 36, commissioners although 12 days came under attack when he was talking to a fellow businessman in have passed since the HC in its ruling asked the commission to revise the front of Dhaka City Corporation kitchen market at Mirpur Sectionexisting roll and put particular stress on holding immediately a meeting of 11 around 7.30pm. A gang of three the commission.

NEWS

from the staff of the office.

me," Munsefsaid.

holding meetings.

"My personal secretary told me

Mohammad Ali said the HC in its

after 5:00pm that a file was sent to

ruling has discouraged the tendency to forward file and instead asked the

commission to take decisions by

ions in the file. But what else to do if

the chief election commissioner

does not call a meeting?" he added.

"We don't want to give our opin-

Referring to the certified copy of

With two weeks to go for enumer-

pare for filing an appeal against the

HC ruling.

The EC Secretariat sought the directives in a dramatic move, forwarding files to the commissioners on Sunday afternoon, said sources.

the HC judgement, he said registrar It sent the file to CEC MA Aziz's of the Supreme Court sent the copy residence at 8:00pm while similar files were forwarded to Munsef Ali and Mohammad Ali after 4:00pm to the commission by a special courier on January 8. "But we've received it only today as the secretarwhen the two had already left their iat didn't care to send us the copy early," he observed. offices.

After receiving the files yesterday According to the timetable, the morning, the commissioners said they will give the opinion that an enumeration and scrutiny of the information collected on intending voters will be completed by January urgent meeting should be convened to decide on the voter list in line with 31 and a draft roll will be published the HC directives. on February 28.

"We will continue our efforts for a meeting to decide on how to imple-ment the High Court's directives. But ation and scrutiny, the field-level enumerators and supervisors con-tinue their work while the counsel of the CEC and the EC Secretary preit is not clear when the chief election commissioner will call the meeting," Mohammad Ali told journalists at his office yesterday.

Echoing the view, Munsef Ali said the decision must be taken at a meeting of the commission.

Only 30 anti-nuclear protesters CEC MA Aziz has already put a showed up recently to oppose a note in the file, asking the secretarplutonium-fueled mission to iat to return it after perusal of the Pluto. The most raucous it got was other members of the commission. when protesters tied colorful But he did not give the secretariat origami birds to the fence of the any instruction to arrange any Cape Canaveral Air Force Station. meeting.

"Folks tend to forget," said pro-test organizer Maria Telesca of the Global Network Against Weapons & MA Aziz has remained absent from work since January 9. His personal secretary Mostafa Faruk said he does not know when the CEC will join the office. "His joining depends on doctor's advice," Faruk told But Telesca and other protesters said the threat of a nuclear accident is no less real with the journalists.

New Horizons mission to Pluto The two election commissioners than it was with the launch of yesterday afternoon sat and discussed how to respond to the file forwarded to them by the secretariat. DRAMA OVER FORWARDING FILE 11 guns seized On his last workday as the secretary to the EC Secretariat, SM Zakaria on Sunday initiated the move to send firearms in a trawler and tried to smuggle those dodging the cus-toms officials. files to the commissioners. The EC Secretariat dispatched the files containing the certified copy of the HC directives on voter list Sunday Law enforcers were searching for similar weapons in the area until filing of this report at 10:00m afternoon.

Personal secretary (PS) to the EC secretary Sirajul Islam took the file to the office of Election Commissioner Mohammad Ali at 4:40. But the election commissioner left the office at about 4:15 after waiting for the CEC's response to their call for an immediate meeting.

Islam asked the personal officer (PO) to Mohammad Ali to put a note in the file saying that the election commissioner is not at his office. Following the order, the PO wrote in the file: "Šahib [sir] has gone out."

commissioner of the file right away. Mohammad Ali learnt about it on coming to office yesterday morning.

governments took time for 19 times. Lastly the government got a six months period on October 25, 2005.

appearances

bread and yogurt.

billion

### **Foreign secy** to visit Russia at about 4:15. Similar note was taken **Jan 18-22**

### **DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT**

Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin will pay an official visit to Moscow for annual bilateral consultations between Bangladesh and the Russian Federation on January 18-22.

The annual bilateral consultations are held in the capital of the two countries alternately under a protocol signed between the two countries in 1992. The last consultation meeting was held in Dhaka on February 9-10, 2003, foreign ministry sources said.

During the visit, Hemayetuddin will discuss the entire gamut of bilateral relations between does not allow more than six years of such tax benefit. Bangladesh and the Russian Federation with his Russian countergoing very slow for the last few part Alexeev Alexander Yurievich, months as the government landed in deputy foreign minister. a very difficult situation over Tata's

The agenda of the discussion include review of the bilateral politiconditions. The company's whole cal relations, promotion of trade and coal-fired power plants depends particularly seeking duty free access and GSP facilities for Bangladeshi being negotiated. exports to the Russian market, inviting Russian investment in Bangladesh in sectors like power formally submitted its proposal for setting up a 1,000 MW power plant, generation, infrastructure developan export oriented steel mill with ment, gas exploration etc.

420,000-tonne annual production capacity and an export oriented The two foreign secretaries are also expected to exchange views on fertiliser unit with a production regional and international issues capacity of one million tonnes a year. that may include cooperation between Saarc and Shanghai DEBATE OVER TATA'S CONDITIONS Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Asean Regional Forum (ARF), UN and UN Reforms, combating international terrorismetc.

Official sources said the existing close friendly relations between Bangladesh and Russian Federation is based on strong foundations and historical links since Russia played a crucial role in support of Bangladesh's Liberation War in 1971

Apart from the bilateral consultations, the foreign secretary is also expected to meet with Russian with gas supplies, the government may ration gas for other consumers and ensure full supply to Tata. If Federation Foreign Minister Lavrov Sergey Victorovich and other dignitaries

The foreign secretary will be closing other entities, its conditions carrying a letter from Prime Minister say. These conditions should be Khaleda Zia to the President of the Russian Federation.

The foreign secretary level conenergy availability, the company sultation may also identify new areas says. of cooperation and lay the ground for higher level meetings. tions unacceptable. "How can we stop or reduce gas supplies to other

### Pakistan likely FROM PAGE 16

has opened its border for all kinds of trade items with all Saarc memduring its 1991-96 tenure cancelled ber countries including India, the ments in last nine years formed 16 sources told Pakistani Dawn daily. new upazilas, most of which were done by the present four-party

Pakistan's ratification of South Asian Free Trade Area (Safta) would automatically grant the most favoured nation (MFN) status to India matching the highly subsidised tariff offered to Kafco. Tata however hinted that it might settle for the gas tariff for local industrial units, which to India. is around \$2.35 per unit.

However, Pakistan's longstanding position on trade in tandem with progress on Kashmir question deal in which Bangladesh is losing would stand dissolved, they said. hundreds of crores of taka," said a Petrobangla official. The federal cabinet in its forthcoming meeting is likely to take up the issue of ratification of the

agreement. Out of seven

# Govt set to accept

DHAKA TUESDAY JANUARY 17, 2006

FROM PAGE 1

with an industrial gas rate of \$2.35 per mmcfd because it will produce cement for local market, and it will committee headed by the communications secretary will send a final summary on the negotiation to the consume only 15 mmcfd gas. Why should we subsidise Tata's exports to ministerial committee and the cabinet for final approval.

Tata Group on April 20 last year

in Bangladesh or anywhere to its

knowledge, and this is a complicated

required, it will be supplied gas by

spelled out because it is investing

huge funds on the basis of gas or

Petrobangla finds these condi-

consumers to ensure gas supplies to

giving it such priority? Why would we

deprive our people for any foreign

On gas price, Tata is looking for

\$1.2 per thousand cubic feet (mcf),

"Following Kafco's instance is out of question. It has been a scandalous

investor?" said one of the govern-

ment negotiators.

Tata? What is the rationale behind

matter.

give it profit when we incur loss?" The government will discuss crucial issues like guarantee of 20 Mahmudur Rahman tags the gas price issue with the guarantee issue. years of gas supply, gas tariff, a 10-year tax holiday and other related matters to finalise agreements for 'We will set such a price for Tata's gas so that the government should not face financial loss even if gas has to be Tata's investment. imported from the international

Petrobangla is not in favour of market," he says. providing a sovereign guarantee of gas supply or giving Tata highest "If we get high price, what is the problem in giving Tata a sovereign priority because its terms go against guarantee?' the interest of the people, sources pointed out.

But gas import from Myanmar, as suggested by the adviser, might require a price tag of at least \$5 per The National Board of Revenue (NBR) is also unwilling to give a 10unit, experts pointed out. year tax holiday as the existing policy

The adviser however believes that the country's gas reserve will not be exhausted within 20 years of guaran-tee period. "Energy experts only focus on proven reserve but the The negotiations with Tata were government has to consider the potential reserve too," he says.

The government's draft gas investment plan for fertiliser, steel systems master plan forecasts a severe gas crisis from 2011 or 2015, on these conditions, which are now depending on the consumption rate unless new gas fields are discovered and start supply.

Tata was also seeking 20 years of tax holiday. As there is no such provision, the government suggested it to separate its proposal for power plant and place it under the government's Independent Power Project (IPP) policy so that it can be given 15-year taxholiday.

For steel and fertiliser factories, Tata wants the government to pro-Tata has lowered its expectation for tax holiday down to 10 years. The vide it with gas reserve data on daily or regular basis from the time it starts NBR however says it can give such project implementation. It says this benefit for six years as per the present is an international practice while Petrobangla says this is not practised policy.

## ADB REPORT ON TATA INVESTMENT IMPACT

Meanwhile, the consultant recruited by the government and the ADB --David Paris-- submitted its primary The company also wants the government to stop new gas connecreport on the impact of the Tata tion, in case the gas reserveinvestment proposal. production ratio exceeds a certain limit. If there are further problems

The report warned the govern-ment to handle the entire negotiation very cautiously to avoid major losses. It suggested keeping in view the rising petroleum price in the international market.

The Tata investment will pave the way for other giant and multinational investors to come to Bangladesh, it pointed out. The consultant will submit its

final report in the next 10 days.

### Hearing not FROM PAGE 16

ammunition, are kept in Chittagong Cantonment for security reasons.

Sources said Bangladesh Army has taken steps to produce the evidence before the court. The bits of evidence were produced before the court in the arms haul case but it was not done in the smuggling case.

Two prosecution witnesses of the case, police constables Mohammad Yousuf and Mozammel, were present yesterday for their depositions.

Fertiliser Limited (CUFL) jetty.

Two cases were filed after the

haul, one under the Arms Act and

Police on April 2, 2004 seized 10 Gas price for Tata should be truckloads of sophisticated weapmade on the basis of economics, ons and huge quantity of ammuni-tion from Chittagong Urea says one negotiator. "That implies a

### the court that Sunny was accused in two cases filed with Sabujbagh Police Station, one under the Arms But he did not inform the election Act and the other under the Explosive Substances Act. Sunny, the younger brother of JMB chief Shaikh Abdur Rahman, was arrested

earlier and is now in jail custody but he is shown fugitive in the two cases Similar file was sent to the office of MunsefAli at about 5:00pm, whereas

the election commissioner left office

Kuwait emir buried

Preparation of voter list may face further complexities if the EC Secretariat completes the field level task by January 31, ignoring the HC directives, manyfear. Ministry in dark FROM PAGE 16

# formation of the new upazila, sources in the LGRD ministry said.

After learning the matter from newspapers yesterday, LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan asked ministry officials about it, but none could inform him about the matter.

Consternation followed when the Chief Engineer of the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) Shahidul Hasan also expressed his ignorance about the matter.

Later the ministry officials talked to the district administration and nformed the minister about the PM's inauguration programme.

Traditionally, the district and upazila authorities arrange the inauguration ceremony and invite the relevant ministries and agen cies.

The upazila system was intro-duced during the Ershad regime, when 460 upazilas were formed. Although the BNP government

the system, the next two govern-

The Supreme Court in a verdict

asked the government to hold

elections for the upazila parishads, but the Awami League and BNP

period of mourning was announced.

tried to assassinate Sheik Jaber in a

suicide car bombing in May 1985, the

emir abruptly changed his habits. He

stopped driving his own car to bus-

tling bazaars and cut down on public

in 2001 and was treated in London. In

rare public appearances since then,

he had difficulty delivering speeches.

The new emir has not spoken in

uncle, Sheik Sabah Al Salem Al

Sabah, on Dec. 31, 1977, was consid-

palace in Kuwait City's Dasman neighborhood near the sea was

described as a spacious but ordinary

house. He often made a meal of

setting up the Fund for Future

Generations, a financial safety net

drawn from oil revenues for Kuwaitis

against the day when the resource is

during the Iraqi occupation, but it still is estimated at more than \$60

The late emir dissolved parlia-

ment in 1986 for severely criticising

the government. He did not restore it

one. The government spent from it

Kuwaitis credit Sheik Jaber with

ered a father figure and a quiet listener who avoided ostentation. His

Sheik Jaber, who succeeded his

public in recent years either.

He suffered a brain haemorrhage

After a Shia Muslim extremist

alliance government.

### **CHRONOLOGYOFTHECRISIS**

Assuming office on May 23 this year, Justice MA Aziz initiated a move for preparing a voter list in last July. The EC held a series of dialogues with the political parties, seeking their opinion on the voter list at the end of the month.

After the dialogue, the commission sat on August 5 where the CEC and the

International Airport (ZIA) said

departures and arrivals of several

international and domestic flights

were delayed by at least two to three

launches plying the southern routes were delayed in reaching Dhaka by

Launch operators said all

Dhaka bound traffic coming

through Maowa ferry terminal was

stretched for miles yesterday

stranding some passengers on the

private cars and buses stretched at

passengers were reported to be severely ill as temperatures

dropped inside the un-heated

A traffic jam of

FROM PAGE 16

at least six hours.

road overnight.

yesterday morning.

situation continued.

road.

hours due to dense fog.

Thousands stuck

directed the jail authorities con-cerned to produce Sunny along with six other accused before the ection co court today as per schedule. who is an expert in poll rigging," he

added. Earlier on May 23 when Justice MA Aziz was appointed as the CEC, the opposition coalition rejected him by branding him as loval to the

BNP-Jamaat led ruling alliance. The AL has been demanding appointments of election commissioners, including the CEC, based on consensus among all political par-

Jalil said the appointments would hinder flourishing of democ-racy in the country. "The govern-ment ventured into such an ill move when people of the whole country are engaged in a movement and united around the demand for reforms in the Election Commission for a free and fair election. This step is a bid to foil people's demand," he

ties.

of fog.

Iamuna.

The other accused are AHM Shamim, 23, Zakaria alias Jewel, 21, Nur Azam Siddique alias Yeasir, 27 Belal Hossain alias Tamim, 21

Granting the petitions, the judge

Aleya Ferdous, 27, and Akramul Islam, 23. Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) on September 8 last year arrested five of the accused, including the woman, at a house in East Bashabo. Suppy rented the house to coordi nated the countrywide serial blasts.

filed with the police station.

The law enforcers believe he narrowly escaped arrest then. The Criminal Investigation Department on October 10 last year submitted the charge sheets of two cases to the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka. All of them except Sunny gave confessional statements to magis trates on different dates.

## BSF kills 2

#### FROM PAGE 1

cane from the forest adjacent to the border demarcation pillar near Koilashor in Indian state of Tripura Paturia ferry terminals as ferry services remained suspended on Sunday noon, said relatives and between Sunday night and yester-BDR sources. day morning due to a thick blanket

At about 5:00pm that day sounds of shooting were heard.

Later when the Bangladeshi bamboo and cane collectors except the two returned, the family mem-bers of Koysor and Haris contacted with their relatives living at Indian town Koilashor and came to know that bodies of the two youths were kept at Koilashor Hospítal.

**PBCP** leader

village with him to retrieve illegal

firearms. But the outlawed cadres

ambushed the police team when it

reached Hasdah village at about 4:40am. Police fired back triggering

a gunfight between police and criminals.

outlaws fled, police sources said.

were retrieved from the scene.

police stations in the region.

One shutter gun and 12 bullets

FROM PAGE 1

All the ferries were stuck in the Battalion at Srimangal Lt Col Shahid Musaddek Ahmed con-firmed the killing of two Bangladeshi youths by the BSF, and said they are discussing with BSF to get back the bodies. middle of the rivers, they said. The suspension of ferry services

Aricha office sources of the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport

Corporation (BIWTC) said they

were compelled to suspend ferry

services for about 10 hours at those

three terminals on Monday for

dense fog over the rivers Padma and

least five kilometres into areas stranded innumerable buses and where there was no shop or place to about a thousand goods-laden trucks at Doulatdia-Paturia and Angry passengers set upon the Kazirhat-Paturia terminals.

bus drivers to take them to restau-Eyewitnesses said the passenrants as children and the elderly gers waiting to cross the rivers had became hungry and were getting to pass through a sleepless night. sick from cold. A number of elderly

### Lower court

#### buses. A number of fights broke out FROM PAGE 16 throughout Sunday night and

On the 55th conference, BJSA also pressed three-point demand to the Local policemen and reinforceprime minister apart from their 11ments brought in from Madaripur point demand, which the BJSA officials claimed are yet to be fulprevented jumping of the queue but said they would not be able to mainfilled.

tain order for much longer if the These include -- appointing assistant judges for the vacant Policemen at the scene told The posts, giving the district and ses-Daily Star that failure of ferry sions judges the status of joint authorities to provide enough secretary and appointing 50 percent ferryboats was the reason for the of the High Court judges from the chaos. They also complained that lower courts.

it would take a mammoth effort to clean the litters left by the passen-The government has fulfilled their demands partly and has not gers in the traffic jam along the taken any necessary steps for fulfillng the rest, BJSA sources said.

Meanwhile BDNEWS reports The BJSA would decide their next that Dhaka-bound passengers faced immense sufferings at plan of actions in its extended meeting on January 29, officials Doulatdia-Paturia and Kazirhatadded.

FROM PAGE 16

affairs to the veteran prime minister, and no major policy shifts were expected

Sheik Jaber, who was restored to power by American forces after Saddam Hussein invaded the tiny, oil-rich country in 1990, was 79 when he died after 27 years in power. He was one of the few Arab rulers who supported the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq to topple Saddam. He allowed his country to be used as a launching pad for the American drive to Baghdad.

The new emir, who suffers from a colon condition and must travel abroad periodically for medical treatment, watched from a wheelchair as the body of his distant cousin, wrapped in a Kuwaiti flag, was carried shoulder-high through a crowd of 10,000 mourners and lowered into the grave after a brief Muslim prayer.

Members of the ruling family, including Prime Minister Sheik Sabah Al Ahmed Al Sabah, stood for hours at the Sulaibikat public cemetery to accept condolences from dignitaries and ordinary Kuwaitis. Sheik Sabah is the former emir's half brother.

Abdul-Rhida Asiri, head of the political science department at Kuwait University, said the prime minister will become the "de facto ruler" for now, and the ruling family could make further leadership decisions after the mourning period.

The close alliance with the US is not likely to change under Sheik Saad. Washington named Kuwait a Commander of BDR 31 major non-Nato ally in 2004.

Kuwait signed a defence pact with Washington after a US-led coalition fought the 1991 Gulf War that liberated Kuwait from a seven-month Iraqi occupation under Saddam Hussein. The small state's strategic significance lays mainly with its oil reserves, with some estimates ranking it 5th overall.

Dadpur village in Chougachha upazila with his two accomplices on The emir was buried in an unmarked grave, a custom among Sunni Muslims in the Gulf area Sunday noon. After interrogation, Jessore police handed him over to intended to convey humility. The Al Chuadanga police the same day. Sabah family has ruled Kuwait for Following his confessional more than 250 years, and enjoys the statement, a team of Jibonnagar police set out for Purondarpur respect and approval of Kuwaitis.

Among the heads of state who arrived to pay their respects were King Abdullah II of Jordan, King Abudullah of Saudi Arabia, Iraqi President Jalal Talbani, and Hosni Mubarak, the president of Egypt. Arab League Secretary-General Amr Moussa said Sheik Jaber was a "wise leader.

Sonu tried to escape during the shootout and died when he was caught in 'crossfire' while the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said that under the emir Kuwait "made progress towards more political freedom, women's rights and social justice.'

Chuadanga police said Sonu was accused in 12 cases, including five for murder, filed with different The US government did not comment Sunday. Banks, schools, government

countries, India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan have ratified the offices and most businesses were treaty closing for three days. A 40-day

Pakistan currently allows import of only 773 categories of items from India under an approved list, while all other goods outside the scope of the list are banned for import.

The Safta agreement covers negative lists of items, which means that duty on these goods would not be reduced but their trade would be allowed at normal duties applicable in member states.

## Road mishaps

FROM PAGE 16 The injured were rushed to local clinics and hospitals.

CHAPAINAWABGANJ

In Chapainawabganj, at least one person was killed and 15 were injured as a bus lost control and overturned on the road in Jamtola in the sadar upazila.

Four injured were rushed to Chapainawabganj General Hospital and one to Rajshahi Medical College and Hospital in critical conditions.

Another road accident left two people injured in Palsha in the

In Jessore, 22 people including three women were injured in separate road accidents in Chhapra Bablatala and Simakhali.

## NBR probes

The officials declined to disclose the identities of the suspects to the media or to any other agency as the persons are kept on the watch list on suspicion only.

Council -- plus Germany were meeting behind closed doors in "The search is being conducted on a random basis and majority of London as diplomatic efforts the suspects may not be found guilty of tax dodging," an official involved with the CIC said. gathered pace.

He said the Bangladesh Bank, as part of its drive against money laundering, has also been asking the NBR to keep watch on some affluent business persons who made frequent foreign trips.

suspension. Officials claimed that a section of unscrupulous business persons epresenting the European Union, have long been involved with money laundering through credit joined the United States in calling for the IAEA to refer Iran to the ards and dollar endorsements on Security Council -- a move that their passports. could potentially lead to sanctions.

Meanwhile a business person said the drive will create panic among the affluent business community who have to travel abroad frequently for business purposes.

The NBR has launched a vigorgovernors in Vienna. ous intelligence drive against tax dodging, which includes bringing professionals into the tax net, and building Iran's first atomic reactor, measures to increase self-assessed and Beijing, reliant on Iranian oil for its burgeoning economy, have income tax submissions to enhance revenue generation. so far blocked a consensus for

rice tag of \$4 per unit. We buy gas from international oil companies at \$2.8 a unit. We provide local industries gas at a rate of \$2.35 by subsidising gas price. Why would we do that for Tata while its Tata's industries are export oriented. We must add gas transmission and distribution cost and then sell gas to Tata,' headded.

Tata's gas demand is also very high --200 million cubic feet per day (mmcfd). A Petrobangla official noted, "Most of this gas will be used for export oriented industry. We provided Lafarge Cement company

another under Special Powers Act. The Court of Metropolitan Sessions Judge on October 24, 2004 framed charges against 44 people including Hafizur Rahman alias Hafiz, Ďin Mohammad, Abul Kashem Madhu, Hajee Sobhan and Hajee Yakub as the prime accused. Of the accused, 10 including the

prime accused Din Mohammad and Hajee Sobhan are still on the run and 22 others are on bail. Only 12 accused are in jail now.

# US may have to go

#### FROM PAGE 1

referral within the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) board of governors. Accain called Iran says it aims only to make power for an energy-needy econ-omy, not build atom bombs. But it the nuclear standoff "the most hid nuclear work from the UN grave situation that we have faced nuclear watchdog agency for almost 20 years before exiled dissisince the end of the Cold War, absent the whole war on terror." dents exposed it in 2002.

United States -- all permanent members of the UN Security

nuclear facility last week in order to

resume research on uranium

enrichment after a voluntary

their weight to such a move ahead

Moscow, with a \$1 billion stake

Britain, France and Germany,

"We must go to the UN now for On Sunday, Iran said that only sanctions. If the Russians and the diplomacy, not threats to refer it to Chinese, for reasons that would be the UN Security Council, could abominable, do not join us then we defuse a standoff over its nuclear will have to go with the (states that are) willing," he said. work and warned that any Western push for sanctions could jack up While acknowledging that world oil prices.

President George W. Bush has "no good option," McCain said "there Europe and the United States pressed China and Russia yester-day to shed their reservations and s only one thing worse than the United States exercising a military agree to a tougher line on Iran that option, that is a nuclear-armed could see Tehran hauled before the UN Security Council over its sus-

"If the price of oil has to go up pected pursuit of nuclear weapons. then that's a consequence we Senior officials from Britain, would have to suffer," he said. China, France, Russia and the

Iran is the world's fourth biggest exporter of crude oil and the second biggest in the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries.

Experts and officials say it may be impossible to destroy Iran's They were aiming to coordinate policy after Iran, defying the International Atomic Energy nuclear programme because much of it is underground and dispersed Agency (IAEA), broke seals on a at numerous sites.

In addition, they have said an attack on Iran could further inflame anti-Americanism in the Middle East and prompt Tehran to interfere more in Iraq and encourage Islamist fundamentalist groups to launch new attacks on the West.

Another Senate Intelligence Committee member, Republican But given their closer trade and Trent Lott of Mississippi, said that energy links with Tehran, the focus despite a massive military commitment in Iraq the United States has is on Beijing and Moscow to add the capability to strike Iran but it of an emergency meeting of IAEA would be difficult and other options must be tried first.

> Bayh accused Bush of undermining the US national interest and creating what he called a dilemma by ignoring the problem of Iran for four years.

FROM PAGE 1 Saddam's troops out of Kuwait, pressed the ruling family to return Sheik Jaber dissolved the legisla-

monthslater. He won the praise and gratitude of human rights activists when he decreed in 1999 that women should have the right to vote and run for office. However, conservatives and fundamentalist Muslims repeatedly

action until last May, when the 50legislation.

armoured columns invaded on Aug. 2, 1990, with orders to capture or kill him. He set up a government-inon Saudi television to urge his people

crown prince.

Like all Sunni Muslims in the Gulf area, Sheik Jaber was buried in an unmarked grave, considered a sign ofhumility

until 1992, a year after Iraqi troops were driven out. The United States, trying to sell allies on joining the international coalition that ultimately forced

some democratic institutions to Kuwait.

ture again in 1999 saving its members misused their constitutional rights. A new vote was held just two

kept his decree from being put into seat house finally approved the

The late emir fled Kuwait for Saudi Arabia when Saddam's

exile in the Saudi city of Taif and went

According to the constitution, the new emir has up to a year to name a

to resist.