## Fighter purchase

whether or not to send a clarifica-

A highly placed source said though the airforce claims that the purchase negotiations were confined to the governments of Bangladesh and China, third parties were behind the deal in both the countries and ripped huge amounts in commission.

However, Chief of Air Staff Air Vice Marshal Fakhrul Azam told the parliamentary committee on Sunday Bangladesh government had not paid any commission to anybody. "I don't know whether the Chinese government paid any such commission or not.

#### **DISCREPANCY DETAILS**

The airforce report, a copy of which The Daily Star has obtained, says, "Bangladesh government on June 26, 2005 signed an agreement with the government of China to purchase 16 F-7/FT-7 BG fighters. It paid 10 per cent of the agreed price in advance. The rest of the amount is to be paid in nine equal yearly instalments."

"The basic price of the 16 aircraft in the budgetary offer was \$120 million. The price later was set at \$135.4 million to cover some additional items and shipping costs," it reads. So, according to the report, initially an extra \$15.4 million was needed for the "other items" and shipping

The report says, through negotiations with the Chinese side, the Bangladesh team later was able to lower the total price to \$117.9 million, which included \$93.6 million basic price of the fighters, or \$5.85 million per unit.

Defence ministry sources said they told parliament this basic price of the fighters, not the total procurement cost.

Strangely, the revised, an 'reduced', deal involved an increased cost of \$24.3 million for

member countries and conveyed to

the Saarc Secretariat by May this

without having any guideline to

removing non-tariff and para-tariff

barriers, the major obstacles to

also the service sector--apart from

goods--into the negotiation process

to increase trade and commerce

seven Saarc countries participated

in the meeting to discuss the imple-

mentation aspect of the Safta.

failed to specify any.

Commerce ministers from the

The ministers also reviewed the

sensitive list of items so that the next

CoE meeting can bring down the

lists of all member countries. They

discussed the working procedure of

dispute settlement mechanism but

meeting, Bangladesh Commerce

Minister Altaf Hossain Choudhury

said low tariff or elimination of tariff is

not sufficient to ensure free flow of

goods. "Removal of non-tariff barri-

ers and trade facilitation measures

In his opening remark at the

The meeting decided to include

making Safta a fruitful initiative.

among the Saarc nations.

The meeting, however, ended

REB subscribers FROM PAGE 1 Each of the PBSs, which have on an "other things and shipment of the

average invested around Tk 100 crore to 125 crore by taking loans fighters", whereas, in the previous from the REB, are supposed to offer, it was quoted as \$15.4 reach break-even point within five million. The report does not years. But they are not reaching this explain how and why this extra point in time because of several expenditure soared to \$24.3 easons, including disproportionately high investment compared to Moreover, the report itself the consumer base and nonclaims a huge amount of foreign availability of electricity. exchange has been saved as

Officials pointed out that due to poor financial performance and inept management because of internal politics, the REB's image is down so much that donors who used to laud REB's success are now highly critical of its performance.

Despite donors' stoppage of funds, the REB has installed over 80,000 km of power distribution lines in the last five years. The cost was Tk 8 lakh per km, and on an average a one-km line serves 20

individual consumers. Years ago, when the REB used imported wooden poles and transformers, among other major items for these lines, the installation cost hovered around Tk 4 lakh per km. But local manufacturers, who include some ruling alliance leaders and other influential people, now dictate terms and make the REB spend double the amount for similar materials. RFB sources said prices of the imported items have

remained the same till today. "Our power network expansion was not mindless," claimed a REB high official. "We are working hard to reach the government's target of power for all by 2020. It is not the fault of the REB that the government sat on power projects."

Sources mentioned that power distribution projects are often taken up under pressure from parliamentarians. Under the current Annual Development Programme (ADP). there are 15 to 16 REB projects, of which nine require basic invest-The REB's implementation ment. pace is usually good

"The government wants electricity connections in the villages, which is good. But what is the use of a line if there is no electricity," one source said.

He argued that costly procurements alone did not increase the liabilities of the PBSs, "The REB first launched 13 PBSs with the best consumer bases. The first PBS in Savar is still the best performing one with a net annual profit of up to Tk 30 crore. But as years go by, we are coming across less industrial areas, we are taking over theft-prone areas previously operated by the PDB. As a result, these PBSs are failing to reach breakeven point within 5 vears as was expected." he explained.

"The only way to improve the REB's condition quickly and better the lot of the rural people is to increase power generation. There is no other alternative. Unless it is done, there will be more incidents as

The PBSs last year earned Tk 2,240 crore with an outstanding bill of over Tk 300 crore.

### Nepali protesters

had marched to Kalanki, a main entry point to Kathmandu.

"I can see a sea of people covering the road over three kilometers' distance." said Raiendra Manandhar. who was watching the crowds from a

At Gongabu, thousands waved party flags and chanted "Down with Gyanendra, long live democracy". Demonstrators were both inside

and outside the curfew zone delineated by the city's ring road. "We are ready to sacrifice our

lives for democracy," said Sanyam "We are not scared of them," said

the 22-year-old. "We gave many chances to the royal family but the king has misunderstood us."

At Chabahil to the northeast, an estimated 10,000 people also rallied to demand the restoration of democ-

Blowing whistles and chanting against the king, the demonstration also headed towards the curfew area under the eyes of armed

### Grisly 'sacrifice' FROM PAGE 1

helping her make the offering of warm, young human blood to protect her property.

That is the version Ratan came up with in his confessional statement yesterday

A brother-in-law of Anwara pinned the sacrificial kid's legs and hands to the ground, like an animal during Qurbani, to help Ratan slay the boy, Pallabi Police Station Officer-in-Charge Abul Kalam Azad told The Daily Star quoting the welder arrested Wednesday.

But, it was Anwara who informed the police on Wednesday evening that a boy was killed in her house.

After Ratan's confession, police took Anwara to Pallabi Police Station to interrogate, but she brushed off Ratan's claim of her engaging him to kill the boy.

Sumon, the alleged prey of Anwara's dream, lived with his parents in a slum not far from the under-construction building, where Anwara lives with her family in the

## Moudud explains

FROM PAGE 1 If any government servant is found guilty of contempt of court, the government will take up departmental proceedings to remove him from the service if it is found that he has really been convicted for his own fault and negligence, the law minister said during an interview with The Daily Star in his office yesterday.

Brushing aside the criticism that an amendment to the contempt of court law is an attempt to protect civil servants. Barrister Moudud said. "It is unfair and unjust to dismiss a government servant for contempt of court."

There is and was no provision for dismissing a government employee from his job if he is found guilty of committing acts that could be counted as contempt of court. But according to the Public Servants (Dismissal on Conviction) Ordinance 1985, a civil servant loses his job if he is imprisoned for six months or fined more than Tk 1.000 or both.

As per the contempt of court law of 1926, one can be imprisoned for six months or fined Tk 2000 or both as the highest punishment for contempt of court. But the Public Servants (Dismissal on Conviction) Ordinance 1985 dictates that a civil servant will lose his job if he is fined more than Tk

The proposed amendment to the public servants ordinance approved by the cabinet on April 3 says a civil servant loses his job if he is jailed for six months or fined Tk 10,000. Which might de facto mean that no civil servant will lose his job for contempt of court as the proposed contempt of court law, okayed by the cabinet on Monday dictates that one can be jailed for six months or fined Tk 5,000 as the highest punishment for con-

Mentioning the 1985 law's provision to dismiss a government servant who is fined more than Tk 1.000. Moudud commented that it was an unfair provision. "The provision was very unfair, unjust, we've removed that unjustness and unfairness."

The contempt of court law does not intend that if a government servant is punished he loses his job. It is because of the 1985 law the government servants lose their jobs, not for the contempt law, he said As these correspondents men-

tioned that Moudud was with the government that introduced the law he said he was in jail in January 1985 when the law was passed. On why he did not take initiative to

repeal the provision later, he said: "I also did not know that this act existed. Does one know every law of the

"Why should a civil servant who works in the executive branch of the state, who works under the direction of his superiors should lose his job just because he has been fined Tk 1,000 or Tk 5,000 for that matter? Do they not render service to the peo-

"What about before 1985 when this provision was not there?" he quipped, adding that they have not reduced the punishment for contempt of court.

"Even in India and Pakistan, the punishment under the contempt of court law is six months jail and Tk 2,000 fine. There is no provision in India to dismiss a government servant just because he has been fined Tk 2.000."

The law is being framed so that the government bureaucrats do not have to lose their jobs after they are fined Tk 2,000 or 5,000, he added. "I'll serve six months in jail or pay Tk 2.000 fine but why I have to lose the job for contempt of court?'

On why the fine for contempt of court was not fixed at Tk 10.000. Moudud said: "It is the intention of the egislature. It should be kept at Tk 2.000. shouldn't be raised to Tk 5,000. Why are you asking us to increase it when India and Pakistan are not increasing?"

On whether the amendment to 1985 law will encourage civil servants to commit contempt of court once they know they will not have to lose their jobs for it, Barrister Moudud said, "No responsible officer will try to defy an order of the court."

Asked about experts' comments that the amendment to the 1985 act is going to take place to save some top bureaucrats who are being tried for contempt of court, Moudud said, "It just happens to be a coincidence. This law will not have any retroactive effect on this. Present contempt cases will have nothing to do with the changes in the law."

Moudud said the proposed contempt law will enable the press to be at liberty to write about a judge's personal behaviour which is not inked to judicial works.

The press can publish correctly reports and comments on a judge's personal behaviour, which is not linked to judicial works, he said adding, "It will also not be contempt of court if a newspaper publishes correct comments or information or reports about regular court activities in moderate words with good faith for the sake of public interest."

Both the proposed laws will be tabled at the next parliament session scheduled to begin on April 27.

# Australia take series

on Warne's leg-spin partner Stuart MacGill, who also conceded three sixes in two overs.

Bangladesh, who needed 384 runs to avoid an innings defeat, fought for the cause with Rafique adding 69 runs for the last wicket with Shahadat Hossain (3) but the record-partnership for the Tigers could only delay the inevitable. The previous record for the last wicket partnership for Bangladesh was 46 between Tapash Baisya and Tarek Aziz against the West Indies in Kingston in 2004

The hosts' hopes to force Australia bat again was dashed when overnight batsman Shahriar Nafees, who resumed on 75, added only four runs before giving an inside edge to wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist off Warne. Warne and MacGill bowled in

tandem to tear through the batting

with a demonstration of top-class wrist spin bowling, removing four batsmen in the span of six runs as Bangladesh crashed to 235-9 before Rafique's explosive knock helped Bangladesh go beyond the

Warne finished with 5-113 while MacGill, the top wicket taker in the series with 16, took 4-95.

Jason Gillespie, who took three wickets in Bangladesh's first innings to initiate an early collapse, was adjudged man-of-the-match for his maiden double century -- an unbeaten 201 -- while coming in to hat as a nightwatchman. The fast bowler was also adjudged man-of-

The first one-day international of a three-match series between the two sides will be held at the same venue on April 23

# Oil hits new high

bottom of a five-year range in terms of days of supply

STRONG DEMAND Oil's surge is part of a broader rally in commodities as investors seek to beat the returns available in equities or bonds. Gold hit a 25-year peak, silver reached a new 23-year high and platinum soared to a record on Thursday.

"We continue to see fund action," SG's White said. "They are coming in across the basket of commodi-

Oil prices have nearly tripled since 2002 and analysts see few signs of the rally coming to a halt as levels push closer to 1980 inflationadjusted peak of \$82 a barrel. setting alarm bells ringing in consuming nations.

Record oil costs so far have yet to derail growth in oil demand or the world economy.

"We are not seeing any material demand destruction even at these prices." said Finlay MacDonald at Britannic Asset Management, who helps run more than \$30 billion in U.K. equities, including BP and Royal Dutch Shell.

China, the world's secondlargest oil consumer, said on Thursday that its gross domestic product in the first quarter had grown 10.2 percent from a year earlier, marking a pick-up from 9.9 percent in the fourth quarter.

A day earlier, the International Monetary Fund hiked its 2006 forecast for global growth to 4.9 percent, the best since 1976 apart **IRAN HAPPY WITH** 

Tension over Iran's resolve to expand its nuclear work kept prices on the boil as analysts fear the dispute could worsen, cutting shipments from the world's fourthlargest oil exporter. Iran has said it does not plan to cut shipments.

The country's oil minister said on Thursday that the OPEC member was happy with high oil prices, displaying the Islamic Republic's increasingly hawkish stance.

"Naturally Iran is happy," Iran's Kazem Vaziri-Hamaneh told reporters. "High prices make any supplier On Wednesday, Iranian

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was quoted by the official IRNA news agency as saying oil had not yet reached its real value despite the recent price surge. The perceived threat to Iranian

supply comes on top of an actual disruption in Nigeria, where attacks by militants have cut the country's output by almost a quarter. Nigerian militants killed two

people in a car bomb attack on an army barracks in the city of Port Harcourt, extending an onslaught against the world's eighth largest oil Separately, Venezuela's

President Hugo Chavez threatened to blow up the country's oilfields in the event of a US invasion, which he and his supporters from poor neighborhoods consider a possibility. Washington brushes off the possibility of an attack as fantasy.

51 killed FROM PAGE 12

The bodies who included children and elderly people were placed in rows on the ground covered by white sheets as divers plunged into the water seeking more victims

The bus had been carrying the groom's party of about 70 people from his home village of Raha in the eastern hilly state of Assam to Goumari village in the same state when it slid off the road in heavy rain early Thursday, police said. Most victims drowned after being

bus, which plunged deep into the pond, another police officer at the The bridegroom, who was travelling in another vehicle behind the bus, was not involved in the acci-

dent while the bride was waiting for

unable to fight their way out of the

him in Goumari village. The wedding was postponed. Local people were diving into the pond to speed rescue efforts as relatives of passengers watched in desperation on the banks. Some relatives sat on the ground wailing.

At least a dozen trucks were brought to transport the bodies back to their home village of Raha.

#### Bhuiyan says FROM PAGE 12

clearly expressed his opinion about Jamaat's participation in the dialogue that is opposed by the Awami League-led 14-party combine.

Terming the opposition condition of excluding Jamaat from the government side of the committee unwarranted, Bhuiyan accused the opposition of trying to impede the process of dialogue on this excuse.

He said the Awami League sat with Jamaat in the past and still they sit with Jamaat in the meetings of parliamentary standing committees

Bhuiyan, also the LGRD minister, mentioned the picture published in a daily that shows Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon and Jamaat chief Maulana Motiur Rahman Nizami are embracing

### CMCH

it on April 10 following an assurance of payment of the increased allowance by April 17.

Intern Doctors Association (IDA), CMCH unit vesterday submitted a memorandum to CMCH Director Brigadier General Abedur Rahman and threatened to paralyse administrative and outdoors activities at the hospital from Sunday if their demand was not met by tomorrow.

The CMCH interns are agitating for payment of increased allowance of Tk 6,500 as per the prime minister's declaration made effective from July 1, 2005 in other hospitals.

### Saitur blasts

FROM PAGE 12 discarded to stabilise democracy,

Criticising the main opposition Awami League for defying Section 144 in Dhaka on Wednesday, Saifur said they (AL) always speak about the rule of law but they themselves deliberately break the law.

"Everybody, particularly the donor agencies, are concerned about the destructive political programmes here. the minis said, referring to a recent IMF report

He said pressure on the revenue is mounting due to the opposition's negative programmes.

Responding to a guery about the government's stance in tackling the opposition's programmes, Saifur said the executive branch of the government is there to protect public life and property.

### Morshed flies

international developments

During the visit he is expected to pay a courtesy call on the Swiss president.

Morshed will also meet the external affairs commissioner of the European Commission and have interactive meetings with EU Parliamentarians, foreign ministry officials said.

The minister is expected to highlight the achievements of Bangladesh during recent years and urge the European leaders to expand bilateral cooperation and assistance. Sources said Morshed will also

inform the European leaders of the arrest of top militant leaders and steps to curb militancy in Bangladesh. He will hold meetings with the

representatives of business communities in France and the Netherlands to discuss ways of increasing import of Bangladeshi products by the European countries and investment in Bangladesh.

During his meeting with the EU leaders, the minister will ask for enhanced cooperation between the EU and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc).

Morshed is expected to return home on May 1.

### JCD men

FROM PAGE 12 confining VC Wahiduzzaman inside. A number of university officials rescued him after the JCD men left the spot around 5:00pm.

Earlier 50 JCD cadres brought out a procession on the campus and organised a rally in front of the academic building where Jahangir Kabir, president of JCD PSTU unit, and secretary Arifur Rahman Noman spoke before leading the JCD men to Krishi Kunja. The VC, however, could not be

reached over telephone and his Personal Secretary Tareq Ali told The Daily Star that the VC was sick.

Jahangir said, "We are demanding the removal of the VC because he is corrupt, we sent several letters to higher authorities about this but they paid no heed."

## Attack on journos

FROM PAGE 1

programmes and resumed covering the Test match and all other sports news from yesterday

As protest and condemnation continued fifth day into the police atrocities vesterday, State Ministers for Home Lutfozzaman Babar, State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman and Deputy Information Minister Abdus Salam Pintu sat with SSKOP leaders at the home ministry yesterday.

SSKOP co-convenors Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Fazle Imam and Mozammel Haque, Member Secretary Ruhul Amin Gazi, joint member secretaries Motiur Rahman Talukder and Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul were present among the Parishad leaders.

The participants unanimously decided to form a judicial commission headed by a sessions judge to look into the police atrocities that left 16 journalists injured minutes before the beginning of second Test between Bangladesh and Australia on April 16.

The commission will submit its report in 15 days.

Sources said the home minister esterday requested the law ministry to nominate a sessions judge.

"I condemned the incidents on the very first day and do so now again," Babar told reporters after the meeting, adding that the probe report will be made public and the government will take necessary action as per the recommendations of the committee

The minister also assured the SSKOP leaders of all sorts of assistance in professional work, when they asked him to take steps to stop recurrence of the Chittagong inci-

The seven-member committee. with the joint secretary of information ministry as convenor, will suggest treatment for the injured journalists and compensation after assessing the damage to cameras and other equipment of the journal-

The committee, which also includes a representative from the vouth and sports ministry and five from the iournalists, will submit its recommendation in 10 days.

Emerging out of the meeting, SSKOP leaders told reporters that they have withdrawn all agitation programmes, including tomorrow's grand rally in Dhaka and four-hour work abstention programme, following the negotiation

**CTG JOURNOS OBSERVE HUNGER STRIKE** The journalists in Chittagong strike yesterday as part of their protest against the police atrocities on reporters and photographers on April 16, our staff correspondent from Chittagong reports.

observed a three-hour token hunger

Chittagong Photo Journalists Association (CPJA) organised the strike from 11:00am to 2:00pm on the Chittagong Press Club (CPC) premises presided by CPJA President Monjurul Alam Monju.

Leaders and representatives of different socio-political and cultural organisations joined the hunger strike and expressed solidarity with the programme.

During the hunger strike, the speakers reiterated the demand for judicial enquiry into the attack on journalists and immediate termination and arrest of the accused Deputy Commissioner (Port) Ali Akbar Khan and other cops of the Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP).

The speakers condemned the attempt of some quarters to divert fact of the incident to other direction and warned that any such move would be resisted.

Resident Editor of Prothom Alo Abul Momen, Bhorer Kagoj Editor Shvamol Dutta, Awami League (AL) leaders Mosharraf Hossain. Moslemuddin Ahmad, MA Salam, Ibrahim Hossain Babul, CPB President Mrinal Chowdhury, General Secretary Shah Alam. senior lawver Rana Das Gupta Chittagong Press Club (CPC) President Abu Sufian, General Secretary Kalim Sarwar, BFUJ leaders Shamsuddin Harun, Asif Siraj, Chittagong Union of Journalists (CUJ) President Shahid UI Alam, former presidents Ataul Hakim, Anjan Kumar Sen, Mostak Ahmad. General Secretary Reaz Haider, General Secretary of District Bar Association Ratan Kumar Roy, former general secretary of BMA, Chittagong Dr AQM Sirajul Islam Chowdhury, Chittagong Metropolitan Union of Journalists (CMUJ) General Secretary Mohammad Shahnawaz, former vice president Iskander Ali Chowdhury. Gonotantri Party leader Swapan Sen, woman ward commissioner Sabiha Musa, Chittagong University (CU) teacher Prof Golam Mostafa, Curator of CU Museum Shamsul Hossain, hawkers' leader Ruhul Amin Ramian and Trade Union Centre (TUC) President Tapan Dutta spoke among others.

### Clashes mark hartal

FROM PAGE 1

The police intercepted the procession in front of Titumir College as it tried to march towards Mohakhali.

On being barricaded, the opposition leaders got into a fierce altercation with the law enforcers. At one stage, pelted with brickbats from the opposition procession, police charged baton. fired several rounds of shots and lobbed teargas canisters, injuring at least 50 people including six women.

Of the injured, condition of Zaglul Ahmed was stated to be critical. He was admitted to a private clinic in the city. Police picked up 15 opposition men from the spot. In protest at police action, demonstrators burnt tyres and rubbish on the road and vandalised two vehicles.

Police baton charge on opposition procession led by Kamal Ahmed . Majumder at Mirpur-10 at about 10:00am left over 30 injured. At least eight were rounded up on the spot. Police countered the pickets throwing

brickbats with teargas and batons. Another procession led by Motia Chowdhury, Hasanul Haque Inu, Obaidul Quader and Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya was dispersed as it was about to reach Noor Hossain Square at about

6:10am. The opposition activists however regrouped and brought out a procession and held a rally near the square at

about 8:00am. At about 10:30am, when a Jubo Mohila League (JML) procession from Bangabandhu Avenue reached Noor Hossain Square, police charged baton and scattered the protestors. They

also detained a Mohila League worker. Later the Jubo League workers tried to bring out another procession. but police kept them within Bangabandhu Avenue, closed off by barricades. As the opposition activists attempted to break down the barricades. the law enforcers charged

baton and fired teargas shells. At about 11:30am, as the regrouped workers took out another procession, police charged baton from the rear and held six female activists They indiscriminately beat up AL's Acting General Secretary Obaidul Quader. Mohila AL leader Suravea Chowdhury and another female

Protesting the arrest, AL leaders Tofail Ahmed and Asaduzzaman Noor got into the police van while other senior leaders lay down in front of it, forcing the law enforces to release

During the melee, police damaged the camera of Daily Bhorer Kagoj photographer Wahid Hossain Raza and tried to snatch a camera from Pintu of ATN Bangla TV channel. Later, they apologised to the journal-

Police charged baton also on a procession of Bangladesh Chhatra League on Dhaka University campus at 8:00am and drove them off.

A JML procession came under police baton charge when the processionists tried to vandalise

vehicles near road No 27 at Dhanmondi. At least 12 workers and a photojournalist were injured during the mayhem. Police picked up five JML workers from the spot. In retaliation.

the women activists damaged a police The opposition combine also brought out separate processions at Lalbagh, Demra, Motilheel, Uttara,

Sabujbagh, Dhanmondi and Russell An AL procession led by Mohammad Nasim and Abdus Shahid paraded Dhanmondi area. At the end

of the march, a rally was held at Russell Square. Meanwhile, unidentified people torched a bus at Pallabi at around

hartal under the present regime.

Our Correspondent from Narayangani reports: Opposition leaders and workers vesterday took to the streets for the first time during any

through the town since early morning, chanting slogans against the govern-

In processions they paraded

At about 9:30am, pickets damaged seven cars near Kalirbazar Bus Stand and clashed with police.

Our Sirajganj Correspondent reports: At least 20 people were injured, four of them critically, in a clash between the activists of ruling BNP and AL at Mahmudpur. The injured were admitted to Sadar Hospital and different local clinics.

The clash broke out when BNP workers stopped a pro-hartal procession at about 7:00am. The fight continued for about one and a half hours before police dispersed the clashing Our Barisal correspondent reports:

Ruling BNP men attacked a pro-hartal gathering in front of AL office at Sohel Square in the morning, leaving at least 14 opposition leaders and workers injured. Of them, critically injured Enayet

Hossain, 45, was admitted to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital. Besides, the ruling party cadres assaulted among others district Bar Association President Advocate

Talukdar Yunus and Vice-president

In Dinajpur, five motorcycles were set ablaze by pro-hartal activists at Hakimpur upazila, adds our correspondent In Mymensingh town, at least 10

Mashiur Rahman Mintu.

opposition workers were injured in a clash with police near Mohakhali School at 9:00am. JU Correspondent reports:

Opposition 14-party leaders and workers demonstrated on Dhaka-Aricha Highway at Savar, disrupting

# Sunny gets 37-yr jail

Sunny said he possessed firearms, ammunition and bomb making materials for establishing Islamic rule in the country. But the six others knew nothing about it. He also possessed explosives seized from his rented house at East Bashabo in the city and he did intend to use

Islam, 23. They pleaded not guilty charges against them. But the court framed charges against them in both the cases

sional statements to magistrates at different dates.

arrested five of them at a house in East Bashabo, which was rented by Sunny to coordinate the August 17 countrywide serial blasts. Law enforcers believe he narrowly escaped arrest at that time.

revolver with a bullet, 700 capacitors, 60 CDs, 92 books and four audiocassettes on 'jihad', 17 masks

made of black cloth, one computer with two printer machines and 10 floppy disks

Other seized items include one

electric blower, three books of

madrasa money receipts, three

diaries, nine books with maps of

Dorjee, secretary to the Department

of Trade and Industry of Bhutan,

different districts, one motorcycle, one punching machine and Tk 2 Later, Rab filed the two cases with Sabujbagh Police Station the same day.

Sunny, younger brother of JMB chief Abdur Rahman and also a member of JMB's top tier Majlish-e-Shura, masterminded the August 17 blasts. He was arrested at Teigaon Polytechnic Institute on December

ammunition from another house rented by him at South Manda in the The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) on October 10 last year submitted charge sheets of

the two cases to the Court of Chief

Acting on his information, the

elite force recovered huge arms and

Metropolitan Public Prosecutor Abdullah Mahmud Hassan appeared for the state while no lawyers defended the accused

plete package," the former air He also questioned the fairness of the procurement process. as only two budgetary offers

having a huge gap between them were short-listed. The process is highly objectionable, he remarked. The airforce report says from among the bids submitted in response to the tender floated by the director general of defence purchase, a selection committee

Bangladesh Airforce pilots flew in

the fighters to Bangladesh. So,

the \$9 million mismatch between

the offer and the claimed cost

arrived in March were commis-

sioned on April 4, with the remain-

ing eight slated to arrive in

"It's not clear why the price went

up even after the budgetary offer.

which is supposed to be a com-

The eight fighters that had

becomes even more dubious

October

**EXPERT'S VIEW** 

force chief observed.

short-listed two. One was of China quoting \$120 million for 16 F-7 fighters and the other was Russian that quoted a price of \$420 million. "It's not clear why the commit-

tee selected only two bids and those differing so much in price," questioned the ex-air force boss. He alleged, "By choosing the F-7 aircraft, the headquarters proved that its intention right from the beginning had been to buy the

fighters from China by manipulat-

ing the tender."

Roadmap to reduce

the next CoE meeting in Bhutan. After the meeting the commerce minister at a press briefing said Bangladesh will consider signing the free trade agreement (FTA) with any country placing significant proposals to bolster trade and

"Bilateral FTA will not have any

negative impact on the merits of

multilateral initiatives like Safta.'

Saarc Secretary General Chenkyab Dorji said the important task of SMC would be to review the sensitive lists in order to reduce the number of items progressively with a view to having as wide a coverage of the tradable items under the agreement.

He said customs facilitation, investment promotion and protection, standards and transportation of goods are some of the areas that require urgent attention. Jayram Ramesh, minister of state for commerce and industry of India, Humayan Akter Khan, federal minister of commerce of Pakistan.

are vital to making free trade a success," he said. HR Mithrapala, deputy minister of Bangladesh specifically raised the issues about simplification of trade and commerce of Sri Lanka, Budhimang Tamang, minister of harmonisation of customs procedures, mutual recognition arrangetrade, commerce and supply of ments for standards, testing and Nepal, Mohamed Jaleel, minister of conformity assessment and transeconomic development and trade of port facilitation among a few of the the Maldives, and Dasho Karma non-tariff barriers.

### non-tariff and para-tariff barriers at participated in the meeting.

But the SMC meeting suggested

that a sub-committee will review the

amid tight security as yesterday was the date fixed for hearing on charge framing against them In his statement before the court,

those for destructive activities, he The six other accused are AHM Shamim, 23, Zakaria alias Jewel, 21, Nur Azam Siddique alias Yeasir, 27, Belal Hossain alias Tamim, 21, Aleya Ferdous, 27, and Akramul when the prosecution read out the

Earlier, all the six gave confes-Rab on September 8 last year

Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka. Rab personnel also seized from the house one sawn off rifle, one vesterday.

The court fixed May 28, 29 and 30 for further hearing of the cases.