'ACCIDENTAL' NUKE WAR

Pakistan, India inch

Pakistan and India agreed to work towards finalising a draft agreement reducing the risk of an accidental nuclear conflict between them at the end of two days of talks here vester-

cussions on the draft text of an agreement, the objective of which is to reduce the risk from accidents relating to nuclear weapons, and agreed to work towards its finalisation," said a joint statement

The fourth round of nuclear talks between top foreign ministry officials was part of a slow-moving peace process launched by the historic rivals

The two sides discussed the draft agreement for the first time, said senior foreign ministry official Tariq Osman Hyder who led the Pakistani delega-

this case. We are optimistic given the goodwill and flexibility on both sides that we should be able to narrow whatever differences that exist at this

He said the two sides were likely to

finalise the agreement in the next round when the foreign secretaries "India will not be the first to use

nuclear weapons. There is absolutely no danger to our friends in Pakistan. head of the Indian delegation K.C. The danger is not from intent.

danger may be from an accident which is what we are trying to take care of with this agreement," he said. Pakistan and India have previously

signed an agreement to inform each other in advance about test flights of ballistic missiles. They have also set up a hotline to prevent nuclear misunderstandings.

The two sides also agreed to discuss, review and monitor the implementation of the already agreed confidence building measures related to nuclear issues, the statement said.

India and Pakistan, who carried out tit-for-tat nuclear test detonations in May 1998, exchange lists of their nuclear installations every year on

Shaon, in Khetlal of Joypurhat and

With Malek the Rab team raided

took him to the Chittagong Rab office.

Shaon's Colonel Hat residence and

arrested Shaon and his wife Shaila

Shanta. The law enforcers later

The Rab did not disclose the date

During an extensive interrogation

on the whereabouts of Salahuddin.

Shaon told Rab men Tuesday morn-

ing that Salahuddin would come to his

and Mashiur Rahman went to the

residence in disguise and asked

there and rang the doorbell. Rab-7

Commander Lt Col Hasinur Rahman.

who was inside the house, opened the

door. Osman tried to capture

Salahuddin, but the militant managed

about a kilometre and caught him.

from Shaon's house.

11:00am yesterday.

briefed the journalists.

remand prayer

PROCEEDINGS

POSTPONED

JUDGES MURDER

Barisal correspondent.

course of legal procedures.

The Rab officials later chased him

The Rab men seized a CD and a

The arrestees were taken to Rah-7

Having kept the whole operation

Rab officials did not let journalists

Osman Gani and his fellow officers

obstructed journalists from talking to

Salahuddin or others. Gani later

Shaon and Mintoo will be sent to

Pahartoli Police Station for the next

Our Noakhali correspondent

reports: A team of Rab-7 handed over

Farug and his wife Nilufar, Abdullah

and Shaila Shanta to Sudharam

Police Station in Noakhali yesterday

The four were shown arrested in an

August 17 bomb blast case filed in

Noakhali. Sudharam police will pro-

duce them before the court today with

Examination of witnesses in the

Jhalakathi iudges murder case was

postponed for a day following

Saifullah's arrest in Dhaka, reports our

tion of five of the 53 witnesses in the

The court fixed today for examina-

Meantime, Jhalakathi District

sources said

secret all along, the Rab disclosed it at

talk with the JMB men although

allowed photographers to take snaps.

mobile phone set without SIM card

headquarters in Patenga in the morn-

Rab's Senior ASP Osman Gani

Around 5:00pm, Salahuddin went

residence at noon with Tk 40.000.

Shaon to call Salahuddin to come.

released Malek

and time of the captures.

Last two JMB Shura men

time members)--Shah Alam alias Abdullah, Arman alias Farug and Nurul Amin alias Nabil alias Mintoo.

Sources said Saifullah alias Faruq Hossain, JMB authority for Rangpur-Dinajpur region, was arrested with his family members and a JMB ehsar (fulltime member) at a rented house in

The investigators later produced Saifullah before the chief metropolitan magistrate's court in Dhaka with prayers to produce him before a Jhalakathi court in the two judges murder case today. The court granted

the prayer. Saifullah and Salahuddin, the last two JMB Shura members who had been escaping the dragnet so far, had bounties of Tk 10 lakh each on their heads. The government on December 19 also announced Tk 2 lakh bounty

CAPTURE OF SAIFULLAH Tipped off that Saifullah has been residing with his family in Konapara, a Rab team surrounded an area of six square kilometres at 10:00pm on Tuesday and searched each house.

Besides asking people about a couple with three daughters, the Rab men also showed Saifullah's photograph to the locals and inquired about

The law enforcers became certain about Saifullah's hideout around 1:00am, said a Rab press release. The Rab members knocked at the door of a three-storey building but landlord Hafez Mohammad Ullah did not

ground floor of their house. Ataul said Saifullah rented the

The Rab surrounded the house immediately and started talking with

Following assurance of security, the militant leader along with his wife Taslima Begum, his three daughters Farzana, Faria and Fatema, and JMB ehsar Selim at last gave in and came

from the house.

The Rab also arrested the landlord The Rab men later took Saifullah to

Rab-1 office at Uttara in Dhaka. Detective Branch (DB) of police Shilpakala Academy has been

declared sub-iail for accommodating produced Saifullah before the court of top JMB leaders. Metropolitan Magistrate Mamun Al JMB chief Abdur Rahman, Siddigul Rashid at 4:30pm yesterday.

Islam alias Bangla Bhai and Ataur Rahman Sunny were brought to Jhalakathi Tuesday afternoon. Market area, mentioned in the for-

The Shilpakala Academy was recently renovated with facilities. including air-conditioning, at a cost of Tk 2 core and officially declared subiail for the trial.

JS session

FROM PAGE 16 issues," Opposition Chief Whip Abdus Shahid told The Daily Star vesterday.

He said Awami League (AL) lawmakers have already submitted dozens of notices to the Parliament Secretariat. Besides, they will continue to put pressure on the government inside the House for holding talks, he added.

The session however is expected to be a very short one as Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar had hinted earlier that it might consist of only four or five workdays.

On the opening day of the session, the House may be adjourned after adopting a condolence motion on the death of Abdul Mottalib Akand, a ruling party lawmaker from Gaibandha.

The main opposition AL joined parliament on February 12 ending a vear-long boycott and submitted its proposals for reforms in the system of caretaker government, Election Commission and electoral rules.

ATTACK ON JOURNOS

Judicial probe body formed

The government has formed a onemember judicial inquiry commission with Comilla District and Sessions Judge M Shawkat Hossain to probe the April 16 police action on journalists at Chittagong Divisional Stadium during Bangladesh-Australia 2nd Test

According to an official release, the commission will find out the reasons behind the incident, identify the persons responsible for it and make recommendations to check recurrence of such incidents

The commission will submit its eport to the government within next 15 days, the release added.

How and when

FROM PAGE 1 attacks in different parts of the country, Rapid Action Battalion arrested another Shura member Ataur Rahman Sunny, JMB's military unit chief, from Tejgaon Polytechnic Institute on December 13 last year. Younger brother of the JMB chief, Sunny was in charge of

Dhaka region. Rab arrested another Shura member Mohammad Rakib Hasan Russell alias Hafez Mahmud, 28, from near Baitul Mukarram mosque in Dhaka on February 28 this year. An Afgan war veteran. Hafez Mahmud was the Khulna divisional

commander of JMB. The most significant success of the law enforcers against the militants was the capture of JMB supremo Abdur Rahman, on March 3 from a safe house in Sylhet town.

The man, who terrorised the country with his ruthless squads of bombers and preferred death to surrender for the cause of Jihad. walked out of his den, meek and cowed, into the hands of Rab, ending a 34-hour standoff.

Siddiqul Islam alias Bangla Bhai, who was responsible for Chittagong region also the operations commander of Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh, another banned outfit. was captured wounded by Rab on March 6 from a remote hideout in Rampur village in Muktagachha, Mymensingh after skirmishes with the elite battalion.

Rab captured Salahuddin alias Salehin, who was responsible for Sylhet-Mymensingh region, from Pahartoli in Chittagong Tuesday

Members of the elite force arrested Faruq Hossain alias Khaled Saifullah, who was responsible for Rangpur-Dinajpur regions, from his rented house in Konapara in Demra in the capital yesterday

ligers surrender

FROM PAGE 16 with 70 runs but his teammates failed to follow in his footsteps during a meek surrender that saw the home side being bundled out for 183 in reply to Australia's challenging 250-5 on a slow wicket

Australia, who have taken an unassailable 2-0 lead, won the first game in Chittagong by four wickets.

Leading Tigers paceman Mashrafee Bin Mortuza initiated an early collapse in the Australian innings after Ricky Ponting rightly called the coin for the first time on the tour but Symonds brilliantly read the slow pitch to take away the home team's advantage with his fifth one-day hundred.

When Symonds came to the middle. Australia were tottering at 65 for three after losing Adam Gilchrist. Ricky Ponting and Simon Katich in the space of 10 runs. But the gigantic righthander repaired the damages with Michael Clarke during a 140-run fourth wicket stand before Mohammad Rafique separated them.

Clarke, who left the side well placed at 205-4 after 45 overs, was caught at covers by Alok Kapali for a 90-ball 54 that produced only two boundaries.

Man-of-the-match Symonds, who always loves to tear the opposition attacks down, kept his cool to see the Australian innings through. During his 125-ball knock, the 30-year-old mixed patience with aggression to hit six fours and two massive straight sixes against Rajin Saleh in one over.

Mashrafee, who failed to complete his last over due to a muscle strain but came to bat later, was the most successful bowler with 3-54.

Bangladesh, who rested one of their premier middle-order batsmen Mohammad Ashraful and were forced to leave Aftab Ahmed out for sinusitis. made a disastrous start losing three wickets for only eight runs. Openers Shahriar Nafees and Raiin Saleh returned for ducks while Tushar Imran was bowled by Nathan Bracken for

Coming in at number three, Aftab's replacement Javed Omar shared a 68-run partnership with Bashar but he was dismissed for 34 off 56 balls before being caught at mid-on by Brett Lee off part-timer Michael Hussey.

Khaled Mashud then joined his captain but the hosts fell behind the asking run-rate due to his typical slow batting. The wicketkeeper oddly missed some juicy half-volleys off unorthodox left-arm Brad Hogg. His 62-ball 36 actually threw Bangladesh out of the chase.

Bashar's dismissal, with the scoreboard reading 157 for 5, in the 42nd over took away the slim hopes to overcome the hurdle. It was Bashar's second consecutive half century in the series and third in a row. The righthander smashed six boundaries in 114

Hogg picked up three wickets for 34 while Lee, Bracken and Clarke took two wickets each.

The last match will take place at the same venue tomorrow.

Filling stations to go on indefinite strike

Gives May 8 deadline for 7-pt demand

Petrol Pump Owners Association (PPOA) yesterday announced going for an indefinite strike in the petrol pumps across the country from May 8 if its 7-point demand, including the execution of revised commission rate, is not metby May 7.

conference at Hotel Purbani in the city, association president Mohammad Nazmul Hogue demanded implementation of the government decision compensate the petrol pump owners handling loss by hiking their commis-1.91 percent to 2.70 percent and diesel from 2.06 percent to 2.40

PPOA's 7-point demand also include the payment of the cost of carrying fuel to Doulatpur and Kazirhat in the northern region, stopping harassment to the fuel pump owners in the bordering areas and establishing a realistic monitoring system in up to 20 kilometre from border belt to stop smuggling of fuel and providing firearms to pump owners for their protec-

The petrol pump owners have not

received anything out of around Tk 150 crore that they are entitled to get as additional commission from January till now, Nazmul Hoque said, adding that different government organisations owe Tk 800 crore as fuel cost to different petrol pumps across the country.

Demanding increase of commission on oil sale and implementation of the decision taken on December 1 to stop adulteration and cheating in weight, he said rationing on oil, if needed, should be done openly or it is to be cancelled He said some 1,80,000 litres fuel is

smuggled into India daily through various land ports, as on an average 300 Indian trucks come to Bangladesh and leave the country after filling up their mega size fuel tank at lower price He suggested formation of a strong

administration and the association to Central and zonal leaders of the association were present in the press

monitoring system involving the

conference. According to PPOA, there are 1576 petrol pumps across the country and

per day demand of diesel is 8,000 tonne and that of petrol 650 tonne

Nepal Maoists

the rebels in hope that they lay down

their arms and join the political

responded.

ade until the first session of parliament taking into account the commitment made for constituent assembly elections and the request made by Koirala." Maoist leader Prachanda said in a statement. But he warned that the block-

other centres, would be reimposed if uent assembly on Friday.

king's climbdown. A protester, fired on by police during a demonstration last week in west Nepal, died of his injuries four

days later taking the toll to at least 15 dead across the country from clashes between security forces and demonstrators. Hundreds more were injured. Meanwhile the authorities on

Tuesday released 320 political detainees who had been held in and around Kathmandu, police confirmed.

"Among the released were political leaders, human rights activists, civil society members and

protesters," an police official said on condition of anonymity. Leaders of the alliance said one urged the rebel group to do the

The Maoists began their armed uprising to win a republic in 1996 and more than 12,500 people have since been killed. They now hold a powerful place in Nepalese politics and effectively control large parts of the countryside.

Koirala's staff said the ageing leader was ill Wednesday, but he met the Indian ambassador amid reports that Nepal's giant republican neighbour was preparing an aid package to help lift the country's shattered economy.

Koirala, who has kept a low

profile since the king's climbdown, was due to address a rally Thursday ahead of his expected confirmation in parliament the following day. He served as premier twice in the 1990s and once again in 2000-2001 In Wednesday's Kathmandu

Post, a front-page editorial warned that the people were watching the political leaders after previous governments had broken down amid squabbling between rivals. The people have absolved the

political parties of past incompetence, inefficiency and other sins in the larger national interest. However the people will not give them a second chance," the English-language daily said.

Buses were running, markets were open, streets cleaned and porters were carrying goods across the capital as Kathmandu gave all the signs of a city back at work after Tuesday's "victory" celebrations.

Iran threatens

threat of proliferation.' The hardline president meanwhile repeated that the oil-rich country "won't back down one iota' in the worsening crisis -- which has already helped nudge world oil

prices to record highs "If international institutions respect our legitimate rights, we will respect their decisions. However, we will not regard these decisions as valid if they are intended to deny us our rights," Ahmadinejad told the official IRNA news agency.

He also warned Iran could "reconsider its relations" with the world

body.
The International Atomic Energy Agency has been investigating Iran for more than three years, but the UN watchdog says it is still not in a position to judge the true nature of the country's nuclear programme.

Western powers, led by the United States, are convinced Iran is seeking either the bomb or the "strategic capacity" to make one.

But according to Ahmadinejad, the dispute was merely serving as a "trial for international bodies to prove whether they are defending the rights of nations or whether they are acting as puppets in the hands of some bullying powers".

The rest of the world must "accept Iran as a nuclear country, which is an undeniable fact", he asserted. Iran's national security chief Ali Larijani had warned on Tuesday that sanctions would merely bring an end to UN inspections, while an attack would send Iran's nuclear activities underground.

The head of Iran's nuclear agency, Vice President Gholam Reza Aghazadeh, was meanwhile to hold last-ditch talks with the UN nuclear watchdog, but diplomats said there was no indication that Iran would offer any concessions. The agency is also still seeking

Coal

FROM PAGE 16

Besides, one of the underground layers is made of a rare kind of coal used for melting metals, the survey found. As the demand of this coal is high in the international market, it can help the country earn substantial foreign exchange or contribute extensively to the national economy, the report maintained. Hosaf will submit the report soon

to the government, sources said.

documents on dealings Iran had with a nuclear black market network run by disgraced Pakistani scientist Abdul Qadeer Kahn, the father of his

country's atomic bomb. It also wants to interview military officers who may have overseen secret enrichment or "dual-use" activities and to find out if Iran hid work with sophisticated P2 centrifuges, which can enrich uranium more quickly and abundantly than

The IAEA also seeks documents Iran has on making uranium hemispheres that form the core of atom bombs and has questions about work that could be aimed at designing missiles with nuclear warheads.

No eviction

FROM PAGE 16

Transport Coordination Board and delay in submitting recommendations by the World Bank supported project rategic Transport Planning.

Although the Roads and Highways Department officials present at the meeting claimed that the Dhaka Bypass would be commissioned by June this year, others at the meeting expressed

Metropolitan Police commissioner, deputy inspector generals of police of six divisions and chairmen of BRTA and BRTC, representatives of ministries concerned and transport owners associations were present at the meet-

The meeting was told that the police

did not take action against over 15-yearold rundown public vehicles and locally made unfit passenger carriers Nosimon and Korimon. Expressing dissatisfaction over the

performance of police in maintaining traffic congestions, the minister said the police do not comply with the directives given by ministries other than their line ministry. He said lack of adequate parking

spaces in front of big shopping malls, educational institutes, and business houses were responsible for regular traffic congestions on the city streets. The meeting also discussed build-

reducing traffic congestion in the capital. The private transport owners demanded specific policy guidelines for running of buses by state-owned Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation on different routes as they

MPs oppose

prices. He will then give his advice to the prime minister, who will take the final decision.

A range of issues including wealth statements of the ministers and MPs, specific government proposal to curb corruption placed in parliament, and bringing businesses at the upazila level under the tax net were raised by the participating lawmakers, meeting sources said. They said the BNP MPs were more

vocal against the possible increase of oil prices. They lamented that, while many areas of the country are still outside the electricity network, those having the access to power are suffering from frequent load shedding. In many places, electricity supply does not continue for more than an hour. So, the ruling party MPs said, the

villagers have now no option but to rely on kerosene lamps. Besides, the frequent and persistent power outage is wreaking havoc on farming by damaging the irrigation pumps and forcing them to remain idle.

prices of diesel and kerosene are raised, the farmers and the rural poor will be severely affected," they pointed

The MPs said. "You can increase the prices of octane and petrol, as these are used by the rich, but not that of kerosene and diesel. If you do that, we will not be able to face the voters

But, Saifur pointed out that the quantity of petrol and octane consumed in the country is almost negligible compared to the consumption of other petroleum products. "So, raising the octane and petrol prices won't help much in covering up the loss we are incurring by selling diesel and kerosene at much lower prices than their

The minister then asked the lawmakers' opinion about introducing a system like VGF (Vulnerable Group Feeding) programme in providing the rural poor with kerosene and diesel.

In response, the MPs asked, as there has been rampant corruption in the VGF programme, so will it be really possible to keep a similar system for to the poor at lower prices.

Moshiur Rahman Ranga, an Jatiya Party MP and member of the parliamentary standing committee on finance ministry, told the press that he demanded to convene a special session of parliament and discuss in detail all aspects of the issue, before making a decision.

Sayedul Haq, the lone AL lawmaker present in the meeting, told reporters that the BNP MPs objected to the plan of raising fuel prices more vehemently. "I said the government should continue providing subsidy in this sector by curtailing expenditure in other sectors, like downsizing the

country. The government should order to close all the shopping malls and markets from the evening, they sug-Referring to corruption permeating every section of the society, the lawmakers demanded to see specific government initiatives in the next national budget to curb all grafts. The

observed. Besides, there are many business enterprises at the upazila level with a monthly income of Tk one lakh or more, but they don't pay tax or VAT they noted, demanding, "They should

be brought under the tax net immedi-Saifur said he supports the idea of ministers and MPs making their wealth statements public. Regarding the proposal to keep markets and shopping malls closed in night, he said the PM herself had ordered that, but it

Fresh list

FROM PAGE 16 Commissioner SM Zakaria and Acting Secretary to the EC Secretariat Mohammad Zakori

The CEC convened the EC meeting at a time when there is none in the EC to oppose his unilateral move for preparing the fresh voter list, as the tenure of election commissioners M Munsef Ali and AK Mohammad Ali. who had all along opposed the fresh voter list, expired

on April 19 Meanwhile, the appeal against the January 4 High Court (HC) directives that asked the EC to revise the existing electoral roll still remains pending with the Appellate Division of

completed the task for preparing a fresh voter list that started on January

The publication of the draft voter list was first scheduled for February 28. but the EC could not meet the deadline. In the declaration of December 6 last year, the EC also fixed June 1 for the publication of the final electoral roll

the EC will go for printing the electoral roll which will take a few months.

has already become uncertain due to mainly shortage of time. The district election officers also said they are facing difficulties in completing the draft voter list due to financial crisis. The CEC on Tuesday, however,

claimed the process from publication of the draft voter list to printing of the final list will need about three months.

Poll boycott

government takes over in October, he said, urging all to wake up to the

occasion. He said the EU will double the number of election observers this time around compared to past elections in Bangladesh on both long-and shortterm basis. In the 2001 elections, there were 90 observers sent from the European Union.

Γhe ambassador said the first EU exploratory mission will arrive here in June to evaluate the pre-election situation, and on the basis of their preappraisal report, the observers will be deployed in different phases

Led by a member of European Union Parliament, the election observer team will be composed of experts from EU member-states and research institutions. Asked why the EU and other devel-

opment partners are paying so much attention this time to Bangladesh election, and calling it critical, Frowein said election in 2007 will be quite different from the 1996 and 2001 elections because of a radically changed global scenario after 9/11

"We've one big difference, that is terrorist threat...we're not in the same world since 2001. It means people tend to react differently on the scene than they did before," the EU ambassador said to underpin his thoughts on the sociopolitical paradigm change all world

Secondly, he said there are so many arms available around the continent. It somebody wants to be violent, he has more chances to be violent than anytime before. "So. I would say the danger of totally

tion is much higher this time than ever Frowein said, "... it is so important that the election has to be free, fair and transparent. If not, there is a very great danger of having violent reactions, of having things happening, which we cannot control--and nobody can con-

trol. And so it is different from other

getting into some uncontrollable situa-

elections and that is why it is so impor-Asked if he apprehends any army intervention in case political parties failed to resolve their differences, he dismissed the notion, saying that Bangladesh's military is very professional, disciplined and an internationally recognised force playing enormous role

in UN's Blue Helmet area "My personal impression is that this international reputation of your army is a guarantee for Bangladesh that they will not interfere in political field," he said.

Asked about the opposition's electoral reform proposals, the envoy said

order and environment in the capital. Butenis said she is impressed with

caretaker government is part of the

Of course the EC has some inherent powers as regards the election results and it is not compelled to publish the poll results sent by the returning officers. The EC can cancel the election results on

By exercising its inherent powers, the EC cancelled the election results of Daulatkhan Paurasava in 2004 on grounds of gross irregularities in the polls although the returning officer sent the

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court explained the inherent powers of the EC regarding cancellation

Nazrul Islam case in 2000. "...We cannot but reiterate that if there was contemporaneous report of allegations about disturbance, rigging of ballot papers or election not being held justly, honestly and fairly, then after being satisfied about the correctness of the report or allegations, Election Commission would be justified to cancel the results of the election and direct

Doesn't Justice Aziz remember this example of cancellation of election results or observation of the Appellate

routine work and likened it with that of a 'postbox'. On enlisting the names of voters in the electoral roll, he said, "Anyone can

register his or her name in the voter list even one day before the polls start." say that no amendment or correction of any electoral roll shall be made under this rule at any time after the notice of election has been issued and before such election has been held. The EC announces

registered an important person in the

In fact, the Electoral Ordinance 1982 provides the EC with powers to register any name in the electoral roll at any time. But is it possible for the EC to apply this provision for people in general? It is simply impossible to do so after the announcement of poll schedule as it

The CEC's remarks in this regard are only partial truth and have raised the question how he made the remarks despite knowing the procedure of registering names in the voter list.

the fresh voter list.

the fresh voter list. It also reported apparently unusual behaviour of the CEC on constitution, but noted that reforms

everywhere in the world are welcome to improve the existing system. But the votal point is consensus Frowein called for finding a reasonable, pragmatic and objective solution

through dialogue. Asked about EU Troika's apprehension that violence against minority communities may intensify in the preelection periods, he did not give any

straight reply. "We are aware of the problem of the minority people, he said. However, he mentioned human rights condition of the Ahmadiyyas, Rohingyas and Biharis and said they are in a situation, which is not accept-

able in international standards. On corruption, Frowein said the Anti-Corruption Commission, as it now exists, is not very efficient. It should be independent and it needs little dynamism, as corruption will have to be dealt with very effectively to increase Bangladesh's economic growth-from 6

as it has destructive effect on economy,

Butenis praises

FROM PAGE 1 US assistance in water, power and

America would take initiative for dutyfree access of Bangladeshi goods, particularly apparels, to the US market by passing the Trade Act Bill 2005.

Upcoming general election in Bangladesh also came up for discussion. And it was hoped in the meeting that the election would be "free, fa and neutral".

Butenis noted that Bangladesh remained with the international community in campaign against terrorism and appreciated its role in this regard.

She also appreciated the government's success in promoting primary and female education, increasing growth rate and improving law and

the warm hospitality of Bangladesh After the discussion, the envoy told

election results?

of election results in Noor Hossain vs

repoll...," observed the Appellate Division.

move for preparing a voter list but the CEC said electoral rules must be amended for preparing a fresh voter list.

But the Electoral Rolls Rules 1982

Buthedid not give details.

involves a lengthy procedure.

Like the politicians, Aziz blasted a certain 'vested quarters' for questioning the preparation of a fresh voter list. He however did not specify the vested quarters. But it is known to all that the Awami League (AL)-led 14-party opposition combine and some polls experts who do not belong to any party are opposing

"You have been internationally recog-

nised in UN peacekeeping mission.

newsmen that the meeting with the prime minister was "fruitful".

Aziz avoided meeting with the visiting

ing his office after the government appointed two election commissioners to provide him with majority in the EC.

The CEC also did not allow two outgoing election commis courtesy call on him on April 19. The media reported these but the

controversy over his appointment, which was rejected by the opposition, who still demands his resignation. The CEC suppressed some vital information while replying to queries at the luncheon meeting. Referring the

January 4 High Court directives, he said the court held that the decision of preparation of a voter list was taken unanimously at the EC meeting. But he did not mention that the High

two election commissioners who all along favoured revising the existing In July last year, the EC initiated a

Later, he said it is not needed. After an EC meeting on July 20. Aziz said there is no provision for preparing a fresh voter list in the 1982 ordinance that suggests revision of the existing one. The two election commissioners also expressed similar views. The laws will have to be amended to

later there is no legal bar on preparing a voterlist afresh.

Referring to Bangladesh's already lost bean market in Europe. he said, "If the government does not take immediate steps to reduce the freight charges the country will lose its place on the international produce market.

More than 25 lakh people are involved in this sector and if the

reducing the charges then these will face unemployment,

towards accord AFP. Islamabad

day.
"The two sides held detailed dis-

in January 2004.

"Progress has been quite rapid in

also arrested three JMB ehsars (full-

Konapara following information squeezed out from Salahuddin.

on each suicide squad member and Tk 1 lakh for each ehsar.

respond, said the Rab release. Later, Mohammad's son Atual Haq came out and seeing Saifullah's photograph confirmed the Rab men that the militant leader resides on the

house four months ago at Tk 2,400 a month introducing himself as a share businessman. "He came at first and his family joined him later," he said. Saifullah who did not come out at first.

out around two hours later at 5:30am. The Rab men recovered a computer, some CDs and books on jihad

accompanied by Rab members later DB Inspector Hasan Ali, also the investigation officer of the case filed for August 17 bomb blast in the New

He said Saifullah needed to be shown arrested and confined in jail custody until the investigation ends. He submitted another petition

seeking permission for producing

Saifullah, who is also a charge-

sheeted accused in the two judges

murder case, before Jhalakathi District

OPERATION PAHARTOLI Acting on a tip-off from arrested JMB ehsar Mahmud, a team of Rab-7 (Chittagong) raided a two-storey house near Choumuhani Degree College at Maizdi in Noakhali and arrested JMB ehsar Arman and his wife Nilufar during their four-day hunt

spondent

Acting on their confession, the Rab

warding report that Saifullah was directly involved in August 17 countrywide bomb blasts, including that near the New Market.

and Sessions Judge's Court where the trial is pending. The court granted the petition.

in the area. The Rab had arrested Mahmud on April 20. At a briefing yesterday, Rab officials said they arrested Mintoo in Chittagong and Abdullah, operation commander of Noakhali, in Chatkhil area, reports our Chittagong corre-

later arrested Abdul Malek, father of

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Giving the ultimatum at a press taken on January 4 that agreed to for evaporation, operational and sion rate for petrol and octane from

On Wednesday, the rebels "We have withdrawn our block-

parliament failed to call for a constit The wrangling in the run-up to the re-opening of parliament came after tens of thousands hit the streets Tuesday to celebrate the

ades, in the capital Kathmandu and

of their first acts would be to call a ceasefire against the Maoists and

earlier models

doubt about it as construction works at many places are yet to be completed. Divisional commissioners, Dhaka

ing fly-over at all level crossings for

face unequal competition with the latter.

"Under these circumstances, if the

and ask for their votes again."

purchasing costs.

fuel free of corruption and make kerosene and diesel actually available

iumbo-size cabinet." he added. Many of the MPs were very critical of the dismal power situation in the

government also should launch a special drive to catch the tax evaders. "Many people send their boys and girls to schools abroad spending \$10,000 but don't pay their due tax," they

could not be implemented.

declined to talk to the media after the EC meeting.

the Supreme Court. Ignoring the HC directives, the EC

After publication of the final list, Possibility of having a fair voter list

Ignorance

grounds of irregularities in the polls.

Division? As chief of the EC. Aziz is supposed to uphold its dianity. But he termed the EC's task of publishing election results a

election schedule at least 40 days before polling.
Aziz however claimed several times that a day before the last election, the EC

Moreover, the media reported various rregularities in the process of preparing

percent to 8-9 percent--to fight against "Corruption is cancer in any country

education sectors. The prime minister hoped that

The envoy praised the massive success of the government in curbing bomb-terrorism through arresting the terrorists and taking various steps and

the ambassador was quoted as telling the prime minister.

European Union Troika on the excuse of illness and remained absent from office for 11 days after receiving the January 4 High Court directives for revising the existing voter list. But he resumed attend-

CEC blasted it for projecting 'bad news'. It is feared that his remarks on 'certain vested quarters' would add fuel to the

Court in its observation said the EC meeting did not specify whether the voter listwould be revised or prepared afresh.

Aziz himself took the decision for a fresh voter list, ignoring the opinion of the

prepare a fresh voter list. We will ask the government to amend the laws if majority of the political parties want a fresh list," the CEC said at a dialogue with the political

parties in July. But referring to Section 19

of the Electoral Rolls Rules, 1982, he said

Hike in freight FROM PAGE 16 per kilogram on the Middle Eastern

route and to \$2.01 from \$1.55 on the European route.

About 18 foreign airlines operate from Bangladesh airports but they do not carry perishable export items showing various causes, he said and alleged that Biman management is also trying to avoid carrying such items by increasing freight

government does not interfere in Farid said.