NEWS

Bill placed in JS

FROM PAGE 1

case under the act for trial unless it is filed in written by a government official with authorisation.

The bill placed by Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed also has the provisions for keeping arrangement for inspection by international organisaitons and extra-territorial effect.

Bangladesh signed the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and use of Chemical Weapons and their Destruction on January 14, 1993.

"To implement the international convention regarding the use of chemical weapons. Bangladesh will have to initiate steps including enacting laws," Moudud said in a written statement.

Once the proposed bill is passed, a national authority named "Bangladesh National Authority, Chemical Weapons Convention" will be formed comprising senior officials of different ministries and defence forces The principal staff officer (PSO)

of the Armed Forces Division will be its chairman while senior officials of ioint secretary level from some important ministries and army, navy and air force will be incorporated members of the authority.

FROM PAGE 1

"We think it is unfortunate that

despite the existence of outstanding

questions and possible leads,

formal requests for further investi-

gation have been rejected and the

case was sent to the Sylhet Speedy

They raised a number of ques-

"What effort is the government

It next asked whether the origin

tions to the prime minister express-

making to apprehend and question

the two suspects still believed to be

of the grenades used in the attack

had been determined and any

forensic links had been discovered

found in the bank account of

Quayyum, the primary person

accused in the case, been

The letter next asked. "What

explained or traced?" it questioned.

further information has been devel-

oped on why Quayyum believed he

would receive a seat in Parliament

in return for his cooperation in the

assassination? Who created this

It also asked about government

PM assures EC secv

steps to the legal petitions filed by

"Has the large amount of money

ing hope that she would response.

Trial Court by administrative order,

the congressmen said.

at large?" the letter asked.

with other attacks.

Kibria killing probe

The bill, however, proposed limited use, production, development and stockpiling of chemical substances, with the approval of the national authorities, for industrial,

tical or other peaceful purposes. But none can export or import any scheduled chemical products without being listed with the national authorities or following the import or export policy formulated under the

1950, the bill proposed. If any company commits an offence under the act, it will be considered that every director, manger, secretary, partner and

officials commit the offence unless he or she can prove that the offence is occurred without their knowledge and that they tried to prevent it, the bill said. On the extra-territorial effect, the

bill said some sections of the law will be applicable to external affairs outside the state if any Bangladesh citizen or anyone working on behalf of the country commits any crime, and if anyone staying in the ship or aircraft commits any crime under the act.

House after scrutiny

police torture.

agricultural, treatment, pharmaceu-

Import and Exports (Control) Act,

"We want to stress that we do not

intend by these questions to inter-

fere with the prosecution of this

case, but we are concerned that

even the perception that the investi-

gation was inadequate or failed to

follow all possible leads could have

a very negative affect on your coun-

try's welfare internally and its stand-

The Congressmen are Barney

Frank, Nancy Pelosi, Charles F

Bass, Gary L Ackerman, Carolyn B

Maloney, John W Oliver, Tom

Lantos, James A Leach, James P

McGovern, Richard E Neal, Martin A

Meehan, Janice D Schakowsky,

James R Langevin, Michael H

While Senators Edward M

Kennedy, John E Sununu, John F

Kerry, Lincoln D Chafee, Patrick J

Leahy, Olympia J Snowe, Joseph R

Biden, Jr, Richard G Lugar, Barack

Obama, Johny Isakson and Joseph

I Liberman signed the letter to the

Bangladesh Ambassador to the US.

Michaud and John F Tierney.

ing internationally," they said.

The bill was sent to the parliamentary standing committee on law, iustice and parliamentary affairs ministry to submit report to the

demonstration on July 9 UNB, Dhaka

Awami League (AL)-led 14-party opposition combine will stage countrywide demonstration on July 9 and go for tougher agitation to realise reform The July 9 demonstration has

been announced to protest the killing of Awami Swechchhasebak League leader Golam Mostafa FROM PAGE 16 Milan during the blockade on July 2.

press conference at the Awami League central office yesterday, AL presidium member Amir Hossain Amu said it will not be possible to hold any election without reforming the caretaker government and the Election Commission (EC).

He said: "We will go for a tougher agitation after July 9 if the government does not take initiative to immediately reform the system of caretaker government and the EC.

its demand for electoral

Announcing the programme at a

Accusing the government of playing a dirty game with the body of Milan, vice-president of Gulshan Swechchhasebak League, Amu alleged that police snatched away his body and buried him without a bath.

He strongly condemned the death threat to Workers Party leader Bimal Biswas by miscreants. Earlier, the opposition combine

held a meeting at the AL office with Amir Hossain Amu in the chair.

Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Motia Chowdhury and Obaidul Kader of Awami League, Rashed Khan the accused claiming that their Menon and Bimal Biswas of Workers Party, and Nurul Islam of confessions were obtained by Ganotantri Party were present in the

France look

FROM PAGE 1 Klinsmann, who lives in the United States and is married to an American, has gone from being the villain to the hero in his homeland in the space of a few weeks, and there have been indications that he will move on after the World Cup.

The Germans will now turn toward the match for third place which takes place in Stuttgart on Saturday.

They will have to wait until the potentially explosive match between France and Portugal ended before knowing who their opponents will be. The teams have a long history of

feuding during games and while the Portuguese have a reputation for being extremely adept at riling opponents, some among the French team are known to have short fuses.

The French are aware of this. "We saw in their last match against England that Portugal are a team who try to wind up the opposition, so we'll have to have cool heads," said Chelsea defender William Gallas.

'We'll be very attentive as they like to dive a lot, but a lot will depend on how the referee handles it too." Gamesmanship apart, it will be

14-party to stage Non-govt teachers countrywide

FROM PAGE 1

schools, colleges and madrasas, called the strike across the country protesting non-allocation in the budget for fiscal year 2006-07 for providing 100 per cent of their basic

salary from the government coffers. The Jote led by Selim Bhuivan also observed two-hour work abstention yesterday.

"We gave the government June 29 deadline to meet our demands but the budget for the fiscal year 2006-07 was passed without making any allocation for the purpose. We have decided to go for indefinite strike at the schools, colleges and madrasas across the country protesting the government's indifference to our issue," Selim Bhuiyan, chief coordinator of the Jote, said vesterdav

Urging the teachers and employees to observe the strike, he also called upon them to stay at their schools, colleges and madrasas for an hour daily from July 8 to know the guardians and political leaders' views about their strike.

Teachers and employees under the banner of Jatiya Shikkhak-Karmachari Front, another platform of Awami league-backed teachers and employees' organisaitons of nongovernment high schools, colleges and madrasas, vesterday observed a day-long strike demanding 100 per cent salary from the government coffers.

The Front led by Kazi Faruque Ahmed will also go for indefinite strike at the educational institutions across the country from July 8 demanding 100 per cent basic salary and some other facilities.

By not allocating additional funds for meeting the teachers' demand in its latest budget, the alliance government has ignored the teacher community, Kazi Faruque, chief coordinator and convenor of the Front, said.

Jatiya Shikkhak Karmachar Oikya Parishad, another platform of Awami League-backed organisations of teachers and employees of non-government schools and colleges, will ao for indefinite strike at the educational institutions from July 8 demanding 10 per cent salary increase

BNP-backed Shikkhak Karmachari Oikya Jote led by Prof M Shariful Islam will go for indefinite strike from July 9 demanding immediate realisation of their six-point demand including 100 per cent salary from the government excheauer

50 hurt FROM PAGE 16

Shimultali at Shimultali market at about 10:00am

Witnesses said the attackers damaged and looted around 30 shops belonging to Shimultali villagers. Later, the villagers of Shimultali launched a counterattack, leaving 50 people, including three policemen of Sherpur Sadar Police Station, injured.

The injured were admitted to Sherpur Sadar Hospital, Jamalpur General Hospital and different nics in the district town. Additional police, led by a magis-

trate, have been deployed in the area to avert further clash.

Grafts reported

FROM PAGE 16

Tanvir Mahmud presented the details of the database before the journalists while TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman was also present Although the database was prepared on the basis of newspaper

reports, they conducted further investigation and talked to other stakeholders before including the incidents in the list, TIB officials said. Rejecting the idea that the data-

base was weak as it was made on the basis of newspaper reports, Muzaffar Ahmed said, "There are many examples of important social research on the basis of newspaper reports."

During the research, it was observed that in most cases the government did not take any punitive actions even after publication of corruption report against an official or person, he said, adding that corruption might have been reduced if cases were filed and criminals brought to the court for justice.

Calling upon the people to make a social resistance against the corrupt people through hatred and disrespect, he said honesty and transparency, not money, should be the basis of respect

Responding to the queries of the newsmen, the TIB officials said they received money from four donor agencies for conducting research and the TIB is registered with the

Bureau of NGO Affairs of the gov-The publication of TIB's corrup

tion database started in 2000 and this was the 8th report.

To curb corruption, the TIB presented a set of recommendations that include empowering the Anti-Corruption Commission, not accepting any corrupt person in the ruling and opposition parties, appointment of ombudsmen in different organisations, quick reform in public administration, separation of judiciary from the administration, cancellation of Official Secrecy Act 1923 and enactment of freedom of

information law. The TIB report found that 49.3 per cent of the people who were directly involved with corruption were public servants, 33.8 per cent non-government employees and 7.3 per cent political activists.

Among the public repre

Shazneen case | Double standard FROM PAGE 1

the contract in this case and termed

the ministry's excuses for awarding

the contract to the second lowest

the lowest bidder's offer was 30

percent lower than the estimated

project cost and the second lowest

bidder's offer was 22 percent lower

it assumed that lower price offer implies lower quality of work and

that is why it picked the second

The committee rejected four

tariff proposal for purchasing

The rejected tariff proposal was

for purchasing power from the

proposed 20 megawatt (MW) skid-

mount power project that was to be

set up in Thakurgaon by Consortium

Tallu. The proposed 15 year power

tariff for this plant is nearly Tk 13 per

kilowatt hour (or a unit). In contrast,

the unit price of power from conven-

approved the tariff rate for power

from three proposed skid-mount

power plants, which are

According to Power Development Board (PDB), renting

power from Shahjibazar plant will

force it to incur a net annual loss of

Tk 96 crore. Purchase of power from

all the three plants will double the

loss. PDB is asking the government

for subsidy for power purchase from

The price of power from these

accused of escalating attacks which

have led to the deaths of at least 830

people according to an official

well as Sri Lanka's main interna-

tional backers, the US, EU and

Japan have asked the Tigers to

scale down the attacks and return to

However, Thamilselvan insists

The Sri Lankan government as

The committee however

tional plants is around Tk 2.

The ministry argued that since

bidder as 'very lame'.

owest bidder.

mine project.

FROM PAGE 1

Tribunal for Prevention of Women

and Children Repression, Dhaka on September 2, 2003 awarded death sentence to all the six accused for raping and killing of Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, the convicts appealed with the High Court against the judgment.

The convicts are Syed Sajjad Mainuddin Hasan, a contractor for repairing works at victim's house, his assistant Badal, Shahidul Islam Shahid, a house help, carpenter Shaniram Mondol and housemaids Estema Khatun Minu and Parvin. The death reference bench

heard the submission of both the prosecution and the defence during a 31-workday hearing that ended on June 27 and fixed July 4 for delivering its verdict.

But due to hartal, the judgment could not be pronounced on that day

Beginning the delivery of judgproposals in total which also include ment yesterday, the court analysed the FIR filed under the Women and power from a skid-mount power Children Repression Prevention Act project, a tender for procurement of a drilling rig for Bapex, and an on September 4, 1998. energy ministry proposal to exempt

It later examined the statements of PWs Assistant Superintendent of Police (Criminal Investigation Department) Mojibur Rahman, the complainant and investigation officer (IO) of the case, Shazneen's father Latifur Rahman and elder sister Simeen Hossain

Deputy Attorney General ABM Waliur Rahman Khan, assistant attorney generals Zinat Akhtar Nazli Begum and Mohammad Nazmul Hag were present for the prosecution yesterday.

Shazneen, also a IX student of Scholastica, was raped and killed at her Gulshan residence on April 23, 1998

PM tells JS

FROM PAGE 1 awarded with the gallantry title anew," the prime minister told the House

Replying to a question of a ruling BNP lawmaker, Khaleda Zia, also the leader of the House, said the liberation war affairs ministry will include real freedom fighters whose names were dropped from the freedom fighters' list.

skid-mount power plants, sources Real and competent freedom said fighters must be given 'khetab' for their heroic role in the Liberation plants ranges between Tk 3.10 per War. she said.

Many streets of the capital have already been named after the heroid freedom fighters who made sacrifice for the country's independence so that the nation can know their contribution, the PM said.

She also described the steps initiated by the government for the welfare of the freedom fighters.

Replying to a question of Jativa Party lawmaker Mashiur Rahman Ranga on fair price of agricultural products, the prime minister said it is mostly true that a section of middlemen buy products from the farmers and sell those at higher prices.

The marketing system is not in the government's hand. Rather, it the negotiating table they left in April belongs to the private sector. So we all have to initiate steps to ensure fair price of the agricultural products

unit to Tk 4 per unit

construction of Dapdapia bridge on The government upon grossly the Barisal-Patuakhali road, the failing to add new power generation purchase committee asked the in the last five years, initiated the communications ministry to form a skid-mount projects last year. committee to find out why the tender-However, its attempt crash landed in ing authorities had selected the he initial stage due to gross irregusecond lowest bidder for the conlarities struction. The communications The purchase committee also ministry selected the second lowest rejected a tender of Bapex for bidder for construction of this bridge procurement of a drilling rig costing too. The purchase committee however did not approve the awarding of

around Tk 160 crore. Initially in a previous tender Bapex had a price offer of less than Tk 70 crore for the rig. Instead of awarding the contract during the previous tender, Bapex cancelled the bid and went for a retender. The cabinet committee was unhappy about this tender and asked Bapex to go for another tender.

The committee approved awarding of a contract for repairing, route patrolling and traffic management for 29 kilometres of road approach-

ng Jamuna bridge, and also approved an appointment of a consultant for framing a Road Master Plan for the Road Network Improvement and Maintenance Project.

UN mulls two officials from punishment for

their corruption in dealing with the FROM PAGE 16 Tk 1600 crore Barapukuria coal this kind of behaviour is unaccept

> able. "We're going to meet this morning to discuss the situation, go over some of the procedural issues, then the government of Japan will have a draft resolution to begin consideration at the expert level later this afternoon, he added. "This is obviously a very serious matter."

> Japan's deputy UN ambassador. Shinichi Kitaoka, would not clearly say whether the draft resolution being prepared by the United States and Japan would call for sanctions against Pvongvang.

Shahjibazar 80 MW plant to be set "It's within our consideration. We are thinking about that," he added. Tokyo has slammed the North

up by Unbited and Neptune, Bogra 20MW plant to be set up by GBB Limited, and Fenchuganj 50MW Korean launches and threatened "stern measures," including possible plant to be set up by Ornate Services limited. The government will purchase power from these economic sanctions against ongyang. plants for 15 years on rental basis.

Meanwhile. Chinese Ambassador Wang Guangya, whose country is a close ally of Pyongyang, said Beijing was concerned about the North Korean launches but stressed that "action taken should be constructive to maintaining peace in that part of the world."

Beijing has refrained from condemning the missile tests, only urging all sides to "remain calm and exercise restraint," with analysts saying China will not endorse a tough response.

the "present state of" Sri Lanka's

faltering peace bid, the LTTE said in

Sri Lanka has slapped an unoffi-

cial ban on foreign dignitaries visit-

ing the Tigers after the group was

held responsible for the August

2005 assassination of foreign

The EU put the Tigers on notice

after the slaving and in May decided

the slap a full-blown ban arguing

minister Lakshman Kadirgamar.

a statement as others shunned the

Colombo preparing

group

FROM PAGE 1

expectation?

Meanwhile, Election Commissioner Mahfuzur Rahman claimed vesterday that the EC is not aware of the sluggish progress of the voter list updating task and confirmed that the EC is not thinking to reconsider the method.

On his meeting with the PM, Abdur Rashid said it was a courtesy call: "I sought cooperation from the prime minister."

Highly placed sources in the government said annoved by the EC's stubborn attitude regarding updating of the voter list without visiting door to door, the government appointed Abdur Rashid secretary of the EC Secretariat on July 3.

Rashid, who was the secretary at the food and disaster management ministry, on Tuesday expressed his opinion in favour of visiting door to door for updating the existing voter

He will join the EC Secretariat next week. "I will also meet with the chief election commissioner [CEC] before joining," he said.

Replying to a question on the EC's image crisis, he said if the EC suffers from an image crisis, it will have to initiate steps to brighten it. Some senior ministers also

requested the EC for reconsidering its June 14 decision that asked people to visit election offices for registering their names in the voter list. The EC rejected the requests and started the updating task.

People have, however, almost rejected the EC initiative as presence at the election offices has been thin since the very first day of the

EC UNAWARE OF PROGRESS OF ONGOING TASK

Election Commissioner Mahfuzur Rahman said, "We do not know anything about the progress of the ongoing task as we have not vet received any report from the field level officials.

Yesterday was the fifth day of the field level task for updating the existing voter list

Some senior EC Secretariat officials, however, denied the claim. "On the second day of the task, the Election Commission Secretariat discussed the issue with its officials who visited different places in the capital on Saturday when the work

began," a senior official said.

'Everyday we are receiving formation on the task's progress from the field level," he added, claiming that the acting secretary of the FC Secretariat has informed the EC about the progress of the task. But Acting Secretary Mohammad

Zakoria declined to talk to the media yesterday Mahfuzur, intercepted by report-

ers while he was returning to his office from the office of the CEC, said the EC is not yet thinking to reconsider its decision. At first he refused to talk to the

media and asked reporters to contact the FC secretary. He blasted the reporters but later allowed them to his room

CEC MAAziz has remained silent since the beginning of the task on Saturday and again declined to talk to reporters vesterday.

Fresh debate

FROM PAGE 1 "The government will not do any thing violating the constitution," he

"Physician of President lajudin Ahmed said he is fit for normal activities, but officials from the Bangabhaban declared him sick." said AL lawmaker Suranii Sengupta, initiating the debate on a point of order. "We want to meet lajuddin

Ahmed at the Bangabhaban to know about his health condition." he said AL lawmaker Mohammad Nasim

said the post of the president will be important after four months when the caretaker government will assume office "Armed forces will be under the

president and they will play an important role in the elections," he

Referring to Morris Chu, consultant physician of Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore where lajuddin had a successful bypass surgery, he said, "Why lajuddin is not taking over the charge when doctors declared him fit for normal

activities?" "BNP-Jamaat alliance is looking for a loyal person as president to interfere in the next election," he said.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman Patal criticised the opposition for creating unnecessary debate over president's sickness.

the ageing but more talented French

who will start as clear favourites. They have a near clean bill of health and after a poor start to the World Cup campaign have come together at the right moment, rallying behind Zidane who at 34 is playing his final games in professional football.

Portugal will look to Luis Figo who is also playing in his final World Cup and the charisma on the sidelines of Brazilian coach Luiz Felipe Scolari

Scolari, who steered Brazil to World Cup glory four years ago in Japan, has won 12 World Cup games in a row -- a record for a coach -- and he says he is convinced Portugal can beat the French for the first time in 31 years.

"Portugal are playing very well and so we can change that history. The favourite is France but the favourite does not always win," he said.

Tata, govt

FROM PAGE 1 delays in taking a decision by the

host country." Meanwhile, the government is delaying the signing of an agreement with Tata considering it a 'risky deal' preceding the upcoming election.

Energy Ministry Adviser Mahmudur Rahman told the media that the government may reach a consensus with the group so that the next elected government can sign an agreement after assuming office.

Tata Group in its latest revised ambitious proposal had asked the government to reply by the end of May this year but the government failed to reply within the deadline.

The conglomerate on April 20 this year formally submitted its initial proposal to invest \$2.5 billion for setting up a 1,000MW power station, a steel mill with 4,20,000 ton annual production capacity and a fertiliser unit with one million ton production capacity

The Bangladesh government and Tata Group agreed to kick off formal negotiations on May 25 and to wind it up by August 31 to clear the way for signing an agreement before November 30 this year

Tata is one of the top-most indus-trial groups in India with over 90,000 crore rupee annual turnover, and over 2.2 lakh employees. In the last 50 years there has been no strike in ts 91 companies.

Ratan Tata, chairman of the corporate house, visited Bangladesh last October to discuss the investment proposal with the Bangladesh authorities.

"Corruption is the enemy of the society, and the people are its worst victim. We want to bring out them from the cycle of corruption", he

involved with corruption. 43.5 per cent were union parishad chairmen,

the report said.

India issues tariff

vear

FROM PAGE 1 The concession rates will be appli-

said.

cable in accordance with the Rules of Origin of goods under Safta agreement, said the sources.

However, Indian officials are concerned over media reports emanating from Pakistan that Islamabad is not ready to open up its market to India for 773 more items, which were previously placed in the positive list of goods it maintains bilaterally with New Delhi

Under Safta, Pakistan had promised to offer preferential access to 4,800 items from all SAARC members and restrict only 1183 items that were specified in the negative list of goods. However, Pakistan is yet to

communicate its decision officially to restrict market access for the new items from India, Indian Commerce Secretary S N Menon said. BIMSTEC DEADLINE STALLED

The BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) free trade pact featuring Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and Thailand missed this year's July 1 deadline due to differences among member-countries over rules of origin of goods, sensitive list of goods and tariff liberalization sched-

While India is in favour of 40 percent value addition and change in tariff heading criterion, Thailand, with whom India already has a bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA), wants 35 percent value addition without changing tariff heading, sources said.

Bangladesh sought a twincriteria on the lines of Safta leading lower market access commitment for LDC countries.

Thailand is reluctant to approve 1,000 items on the negative list of goods submitted by India under BIMSTEC and it wants a shorter list.

The parties could not yet reach a consensus on how many items to be included in the tariff liberalization programme under the BIMSTEC FTA accord while the dispute settlement mechanism also got caught up in divergences of views, said the sources

The BIMSTEC free trade pact

for the farmers," she said, adding tives who were found directly that the government will recast the Directorate of Agriculture Products Marketing

The PM, however, said the farmers are getting fair price of their products and the farmers' financial condition has improved a lot.

Moudud

office in the capital

On removal of the chief election commissioner (CEC), the law minister said the EC is a constitutional institution, so according to the constitution nobody can remove any

About the 14-party opposition the EC and the caretaker government system. Moudud said they [opposition] just want to dictate the

It is not possible to form an discussion with all the political parties, he said adding that to carry amended, which requires the support of two thirds majority in parlia-

The law minister also noted that during the Awami League (AL) rule from 1996 to 2001, they did not take any steps for reforms in electoral or

Moudud termed the recent meeting between Jatiya Party Chairman Hussain Muhammad Ershad and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia 'significant' from the political perspective.

Terming the opposition's demand for excluding Jamaat-e-Islami from the proposed dialogue 'irrational', he said that as Jamaat has representation in Parliament, they cannot be put aside adding that the opposition alliance is not truly interested in dialogue.

Confirming lajuddin Ahmed as the president of the country, the law minister said that the political parties are just creating confusion over the issue. "The speaker would step down as soon as the president becomes fit to perform his duty," he said

Moudud also brushed aside the complaints of violation of the constitution regarding the acting president issue

The law minister also talked on separation of judiciary, autonomy of the radio and television, enactment of domestic violence law and electoral manifesto of the BNP.

that it is the Sri Lankan government which is to blame. He argues that the international community has been misled by Colombo and added that the security situation was 'worsening everyday."

towards a war." he said,

tit-for-tat killings.

raping.

tion.'

uncertain

FROM PAGE 16

count.

that it might encourage the rigers to rethink their use of violence and return the to the table.

North Korea

FROM PAGE 16

The killings and other reported terms of peace and stability not only atrocities have occurred despite a of Japan but also of international 2002 ceasefire brokered between society. We strongly protest against Colombo and the LTTE and put in North Korea.' place by peace broker Norway. "Japan will take stern measures

"The government of Sri Lanka against North Korea." he added and its security forces have not "Cooperating with the United demonstrated a will when it comes States, we will work for the UN to the implementation of the Security Council to take appropriate ceasefire," Thamilselvan said, measures. speaking through an interpreter.

Both the Tigers and government

have warned of a return to full-scale

war, and blamed the other for pro-

voking it as civilian deaths mount in

back using supersonic bombers and

artillery after the Tiger rebels were

held responsible for suicide bomb

attacks against top military officers

blame on "paramilitary" groups he

said have been let loose by the army

on a terrified public while the gov-

"These groups are still active"

despite being prohibited under the

ceasefire, he said. "They are creat-

ing problems -- they come and kill at

random, killing women, children,

the ceasefire agreement is in opera-

cast doubt over the truce, and their

role in the peace process remains

provide staff for the 57-member Sri

Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM)

held a meeting in Oslo last week to

consider their future engagement,

The chief negotiator for Northern

reland's main Roman Catholic

party, Sinn Fein, travelled here

Monday and was quoted by the

Tigers as saying that the EU ban on

Martin McGuinness, the first

the guerrillas was a "huge mistake."

European politician to visit the

region after the EU ban, discussed

but failed to end the deadlock.

"All of that is still going on while

Ceasefire monitors have also

The five Nordic nations which

ernment feigns peace moves.

Thamilselvan put particular

and mine attacks against civilians.

The Sri Lankan military has hit

"Japan will take any kind of Recent arms purchases, training sanctions we can take. exercises and small-scale military In Washington, US national operations "seriously indicate the security advisor Stephen Hadley government is pushing the situation

condemned the tests, saying: "We do consider it provocative behaviour

But he said the Taepodong-2 did not pose a danger to the United States because "a missile that fails after 40 seconds is not a threat."

The US missile defense system based in California, Alaska and onboard US Navy ships had been on high alert in anticipation of the Taepodong-2 test and was ready to shoot any missile down if it threatened US territory.

But since the long-range missile failed at an early stage, "no action was taken," said a US defense official.

A senior US official said the United States was sending its envoy to the six-nation North Korean nuclear talks, Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, to Asia on Wednesday to discuss the situation.

Hill warned last week that a longrange missile launch by North Korea could derail the stalled six-party talks over Pyongyang's nuclear program.

The negotiations, which began in August 2003, have been stalled since November last year over Pyongyang's objections to the mposition of financial sanctions by the United States

Hill said a missile test would actually compromise rather than strengthen the security of Kim Jong-II's regime.

Preparations for the launch of a multi-stage Taepodong-2 with a range of up to 6,700 kilometers (4,200 miles) had been underway for several weeks at Musudanri on the remote northeast coast of North Korea

Proceedings FROM PAGE 16 a petition filed by Matiur Rahman and Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of the newspaper, seeking uashment of the case. After four weeks of publication of the news headlined "Public works

free market access to most of the

Maldives would implement the first

phase by 2011 and the second

Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and

goods from July 1, 2010.

phase from 2017.

minister has objection to police complex being built at Rajarbagh" Mirza Abbas filed a defamation case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka, against the editor and the publisher on February 5.

"The news tarnished my image and status in society as well as in my constituency," the minister stated in the libel suit.

Advocate SM Rezaul Karim appeared for the petitioners.

Opposition FROM PAGE 16

The members of the US delegation include International Editor of Dallas Morning News Timothy Connolly religious reporter of Detroit Free Press David Crumm, columnist of Minneapolis Star Tribune David Hage and representative of East-West Center Susan Kreifels.

The US journalists' team is visiting Bangladesh as part of a three-nation tour under the sponsorship of the East-West Center for building understanding between the United States and the Asian Muslim World

During their stay here, the US journalists will also meet a number of religious and political leaders.

was originally scheduled to be FROM PAGE 16 implemented in two phases. In the first fast phase, India, Thailand and Sri Lanka were to grant free access

to selected goods from the LDCs between July this year and July next In the second phase, India, members of the commission. Thailand and Sri Lanka would allow

alliances' demands for reforms in government on issues that have already been resolved.

interim government following a out the opposition proposed reforms, the constitution need to be ment.

caretaker government systems.