NEWS

propriate Gas Booster

Compressor (GBC) as the major

cause of the problem. But the

company would not change these

faulty machinery, neither would

Committee on January 1

approved the Chandpur bid of

Harbin in violation of the Public

Procurement Regulation (PPR)

2003 that upheld the IMED's

authority to give a verdict through

an independent review committee

over any procurement in case of a

dispute. The Chandpur issue is

reviewed by the IMED's commit-

Saifur Rahman told the press

"The company (Harbin) that got

the deal will do it for Tk 86 crore

less than the next bidder. Why

Harbin has been receiving

unusual favours from the alliance

got an exceptional treatment from

the purchase body that allowed it

around Tk 50 crore or 10 percent

advance down payment for imple-

menting the project. The govern-

ment had restricted such down

the only exception in this regard.

The business lobby backing

Harbin admitted to The Daily Star

how they spent money generously

behind a section of officials,

including those of the PDB and

the power ministry, and also some

policymakers and influential

politicians at the 'alternative

Meanwhile, following the pur-

The Cabinet Purchase

the PDB penalise it.

tee as per the PPR.

would we pay more?"

5

international airport and bombed the

main highway to Syria as well as

Lebanon. Actually it is cutting the

country into pieces, whereby more

than 20 bridges in the country have

been destroyed," Lebanese Prime

evacuate stranded nationals. Beirut

residents were stocking up on basic

goods and making plans to flee to the

perceived safety of the mountains

Israel army chief Dan Halutz

"Lebanon is paying a very heavy

A UN mission despatched to the

outside the capital.

As foreign governments sought to

Minister Fuad Siniora told CNN.

'It's sparing nobody, in no area of

bridges and power stations.

Call for movement

election system

The benefit of the country's economic growth over the last fifteen years did not reach the grass roots level people and the dream for an equitable, democratic and noncommunal society could not be achieved, they said.

"The very concept of the caretaker government and the provision of appointing technocrat minister should be cancelled immediately for the development of democratic norms in the country," said advocate AEM Sarwar-ul-Alam Dudu, special guest at the dialogue.

If election is held under an elected government, the government would be much more responsible, he said, adding that appointing a technocrat minister is against the norms of democracy.

Politics has been difficult for the politicians due to lack of confidence on each other, he said.

He demanded salary cut of the parliament members for remaining absent from the parliament. Sarwar also demanded stop-

page of calling hartal as it brings tremendous difficulties for the common people.

Executive Director of the CPD Debapriya Bhattacharya moderated the seven hour-long dialogue held at Begum Rokeya auditorium of Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Services (RDRS).

Presided over by renowned educationist Prof Reza Shah Towfigur Rahman, the dialogue was also addressed by former member of caretaker government Hafizuddin Khan, former president of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) Laila Rahman Kabir, editor of the Daily Star Mahfuz Anam, and prominent politician Mohammad Afzal.

Local leaders of various political parties, professionals, lawyers, teachers, representatives of local government, NGO workers, social and cultural activists also participated in the lively dialogue and expressed their views on bringing reforms in the existing political and election system

In his presidential address, Prof Reza Shah Towfigur Rahman said in the present day world there is no alternative to democratic form of government and the civil society is trying to help flourish democracy in the country.

People expect that the politicians also would be civil, he said, adding that otherwise the discrepancy among the people will not lessen and democracy will not survive.

He expressed hope that the civil society's continuous work for betterment of the society will help to resolve the crises.

Former adviser to caretaker government Hafizuddin Khan urged people to cast vote considering the competence of the candidate instead of considering his election symbol

He said people have no confidence on the present EC and its chief. "It is not possible to hold a free and fair election under this commis-

ineffective, he said people cannot rely on it for its recent activities in connection with preparing the voter death.

Mahfuz Anam called upon the country's civil society to be conscious so that eligible voters are not left out of the voter list He said the civil society is not a

political party but it has the right to make the political parties accountable, transparent and pro-people. He observed that those who auestioned the right of the civil society are actually trying to snatch people's democratic right.

The Daily Star editor urged people to be involved in the activities regarding the preparation of the voter list and launch a nationwide movement for encouraging everybody to be listed in the voter list.

TIB, he said people in the country are Lauding CPD, Prothom Alo, The not fit to probe the so-called corruption Daily Star and Channel i for organissituation. ing dialogues across the country Abdur Rouf Manik, chairman of he parliamentary body formed a sub-Rangpur municipality, said the committee to probe the finds of the TIB

honest and patriotic ones must replace the corrupt and crooked leaders

Most of the politicians are out to make a quick buck and therefore, it is unrealistic to expect them to work for the development of the country observed. Manik also stressed on the need

for the political leaders of proper education being nominated for the next election.

He suggested that the political parties should not nominate anyone who has not been involved in politics for at least five years. Rangpur Chamber of Commerce

and Industries President Mostafa Azad Choudhury said reforms of the political parties are essential for the parliamentary democracy to sustain the country

He said the businessmen should business, not politics. Political parties must be regis-

tered by the Election Commission otherwise, accountability and transparency of those cannot be ensured, Choudhury added.

Vice-president of Rangpur unit Sammilito Sangskritik Jote Dr Mafizul Islam Mantu said the student politics these days are dominated by violence and musclemen It is unfortunate for the country that the student leaders are not even students anymore, he added.

"We need to change the existing culture of the politics for the sake of

future of the nation," he noted. Criticising the role of foreigr envoys in country's politics, he said, "Politicians cannot stand suggestions from the civil society, whereas they seem very tolerant towards dictates from the foreign diplomats.'

Imrul Kaes Moniruzzaman, director (Social Empowerment) of Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service (RDRS), described the civil society initiative for accountable development as a step taken too late to be effective for the election 2007. He said, "They [civil society

should have waged the campaign for honest and patriotic candidates much earlier." Advocate MA Bashar Tipu, vice-

PDB's draft deal

from the bigots. They have pleaded with the local administration to FROM PAGE 1

Ahmadiyyas

kind of contact with them.

FROM PAGE 1

report

after the meeting

filling stations.

vheelers

freedom of the press.'

JS probe body

Criticising the newspapers for running

'false' reports. the communications

minister said. "It was I. who as the

information minister had ensured the

Endorsing the minister's demand,

"We will examine the report. We will

f we find it baseless." Manjur, the

convenor of the sub-committee, told

The Daily Star on October 2 last year

PROBE INTO THE CNG SCAM

The parliamentary body on communi-

cations ministry in 2004 raised allega-

tions of corruption against the minister

and the state minister of the ministry

and formed two sub-committees to

import of CNG-run auto-rickshaws

and allocation of land to set up CNG

January 7 2004 formed a sub-

committee headed by ruling BNP

awmaker Nadeem Mostafa to probe

Nazmul Huda's allowing only one

company to import CNG-run three-

It formed another sub-committee

The parliamentary body on

FROM PAGE 16

ensure security for them, otherwise legitimise the flawed bid on the they feared they might be starved to pretext of low price while keeping provisions for supplying inferior Noor Hossain Nurani, president products.

of Khatme Nabuwat Movement The PDB in a statement on the Bangladesh, who addressed the Chandpur project identified at Thursday's rally, told The Daily Star least more than a hundred types last night, "Ahmadiyyas are not of essential spare parts of differ-Muslims and so we've asked all ent categories, numbering at least 500, that are missing. The PDB local Muslims to stop having any estimate puts the price of the missing parts around \$5.5 million.

The actual number of missing spare parts however increases dramatically up to 4,448 on an analysis of the PDB's statement and technical evaluation of the Chandpur project, the sources pointed out.

For instance, Harbin did not Making an oblique reference to the mention either the capacity or the origin of the compressor in the contract documents. This has a significant impact on the price. The company used the same trick in Tongi plant and supplied compressor of lower capacity and unidentified origin, and cheated not proceed on with the issue if we find the PDB of about Tk 20 crore. the report objective. But we will protest

Harbin also did not mention the names and origin of the manufacturers of air-filters. It had installed poor quality air-filters in Tongi plant, which had been causing frequent closures.

The Chinese company also refrained from giving the name and origin of the manufacturer of transformer, a vital and expensive equipment for a power plant, and probe the allegations of corruption in which can cause maximum outage due to its poor quality.

A prime example of inefficiency, poor machinery and corruption, Tongi plant was shut down for more than 2,933 hours between August 24 last year and April this year. In terms of money, this made the PDB incur a loss of over Tk 40 crore for being unable to sell power from the plant during this period.

neaded by BNP lawmaker Mahmudul Haque Rubel on February 14 last year Of all the sub-standard equipo probe the allegation against State ment installed by the company, Minister for Communications Salah the PDB has singled out an inap-Uddin Ahmed in allocation of lands to

set up CNG filling stations. The probe bodies are yet to submit their report although they were asked to do so within a month of their formation

Cops club FROM PAGE 1

yesterday brought out a procession after a demonstration at Muktangon in the city. But as soon as they brought out the procession police blocked it.

In the face of police barricade the teachers started marching towards the Central Shaheed Minar when police started clubbing them indiscriminately

Following the police excess, the teachers staged an instant sit-in programme on the road. the pieces of evidence. He said the

The leaders called for demonstrations in every upazila of the country protesting the police atrocities coinciding with their protests at Muktangon and on the Centra

centre of power' of the government. Cross-examination

FROM PAGE 16

prosecution failed to produce the seizure list, witnesses and exhibit evidence before the court even after several court directives The court also asked the

October 20, 2004 sentenced Faruk to life imprisonment in the sensational Jail Killing Case.

2 killed failed to produce the then Officer-FROM PAGE 1 in-charge (OC) of Cantonment

cohorts.

Khulna, our Khulna correspondent reports. The dead Mithu Mollah, 40,

was arrested at Harhikhali of the same upazila on Fridav noon. Following his confessional

the court to give his statement as statement during police interrogation, a police team along with him

Tk 9,000cr

FROM PAGE 1 petroleum products and the govern-

ment study shows that of the total implicit subsidy, Tk 6,500 crore was allocated against them.

The government recently increased the prices of diesel and kerosene by 10 per cent and those of octane and petrol by 30 per cent to reduce loss.

Energy ministry sources said the recent price increase will save around Tk 1,700 crore of the total loss. "But, this is a small effort to check the continuous huge loss and the situation is getting worse with the recent price hike of oil in international market." an official said

He predicted that chances are very little that the oil prices in international market will reduce in the next two or three years.

the only one that was formally On the other hand, power and fertiliser production consumes around 75 per cent of the country's total natu ral gas and the government has to chase committee meeting, its subsidise Tk 700 crore to ensure gas Chairman Finance Minister M supply to these plants.

The study said there is a price gap of Tk 23 and Tk 30 per million cubic feet (mcf) in case of consumption of natural gas by power and fertiliser plants.

It observed that gas subsidies to power plants, using almost half of the gas products, did not benefit the poor because of their very limited use of power

government all along. In its sec-For power prices, Tk 1,300 crore ond deal for the 90 MW has gone as implicit subsidy per year, Fenchuganj plant, the company

the report said. The power ministry recently sent a proposal to the Prime Minister's Office to increase prices of power in urban areas. "But, the loss in the power sector will not decrease even if the new price is implemented," said a ministry official.

Both the IMF and World Bank payments from 2003 and Harbin is advised the government to introduce energy price formula to reduce the huge gap between costs of production and selling power and energy related products

If the energy price formula is introduced, the government will adjust the selling costs of power and petroleum products every six months, a finance ministry official said.

He, however, said the government is not interested in introducing the formula ahead of the election. The next government will decide on the

307 detained

FROMPAGE 16

over the past two years. Pakistan Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam dismissed India's allegations as "unsubstantiated."

Initial fallout came quickly, with talks between the foreign secretaries of India and Pakistan planned for July 20 cancelled, Indian media reported Saturday.

Singh told reporters Friday that investigators were certain that terror cells operating in India "are instigated, inspired and supported by elements across the border, without weeks ado. which they cannot act with such devastating effect."

Singh noted that Pakistan had assured India two years ago that its territory "would not be used to promote, encourage, aid and abet terrorism."

"That assurance has to be fulfilled before the peace process and other processes progress," he said.

18 Lebanese burned

FROM PAGE 1 face of Hezbollah attacks as "disproportionate"

The death toll mounted further on Saturday, with at least 100 now killed on both sides since the conflict erupted following the capture of two Israeli soldiers in a Hezbollah attack on Wednesday.

Eighteen civilians, including nine children, were burnt alive when missiles from an Israeli helicopter gunship slammed into a convoy of residents fleeing border villages in south Lebanon, UN and hospital sources said.

Another seven people were killed warned his forces would continue to n other raids against bridges and strike Hezbollah and other infrastrucpetrol stations in eastern and southture targets in Lebanon. ern Lebanon, including a strike that blocked the main border crossing into price because of Hezbollah: bridges, Syria, bring the toll in Lebanon to at roads and airports destroyed -- and i least 87. could yet be deprived of other infra-

"You wanted an open war, you will structure.' get an open war," Nasrallah had warned as he emerged unscathed region by Secretary General Kofi after Israeli air strikes late Fridav Annan is in Egypt for an emergency destroyed his home and office in meeting of Arab foreign ministers. Beirut's southern suburbs.

At Friday's Security Council In a dramatic new show of force. meeting. US Ambassador John Nasrallah boasted his Shia Muslim Bolton laid sole blame for the escalatmovement had struck an Israeli ing violence on Israel's arch-foes Iran warship patrolling in the and Svria and their support for Mediterranean sea off Lebanon, Hezbollah and Hamas. telling his supporters to "watch it In one of the strongest statements

burning' from a world leader on the conflict. Israel has recovered the body of President Jacques Chirac of France, one of four sailors missing after what the former colonial power in t said was an attack by an Iranian-Lebanon, said Israel appeared to made rocket. bringing to nine the wish to destroy" Lebanon. number of servicemen killed since Lebanon has been mired in its Wednesday

strike as far as the commercial capital

Tel Aviv -- and that Nasrallah was still

opportunity. That's why he had better

pray to Allah," said cabinet minister

Despite urgent appeals for

restraint, international diplomatic

efforts at containing the conflict have

so far failed, with the United States

is for Hezbollah to lav down its arms.

to stop attacking" Israel, Bush said at

the G8 summit in Russia, adding that

Svria must "exert influence" on

"The best way to stop the violence

standing firmly behind its ally Israel.

"We will wipe him out at the first

n its sights.

Zeev Boim.

Hezbollah

own political crisis since the murder As a fresh barrage of guerrilla of ex-premier Rafig Hariri in 2005 and rockets rained on northern Israel -is still rebuilding after the devastating including the Galilee town of Tiberias. 1975-1990 civil war. Israel warned that Hezbollah could The Western-backed Lebanese

government -- which includes two Hezbollah ministers but is led by anti-Syrian politicians -- denied any involvement in the Hezbollah action and demanded a "complete and immediate ceasefire"

Israel also pressed on with its air assault on Gaza on Saturday, killing two Palestinians in helicopter strikes after the United States on Thursday vetoed a UN resolution calling on Israel to halt its military operations

At least 78 Palestinians and one Israeli soldier have been killed since Israel launched its assault on Gaza. which the United Nations has warned is causing a humanitarian crisis in one of the most densely populated

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Israel's concerns were "legitiareas on earth. mate," but that "recourse to violence Both Hezbollah and Palestinian must be balanced and it must be militants holding the soldiers are stopped as soon as possible." demanding the release of prisoners Israel's onslaught was unleashed from Israeli jails -- something Israel

after Hezbollah guerrillas snatched has rejected outright. two soldiers Wednesday, opening up Army chief Halutz said Friday that a new battleground following a all three captured servicemen were similar deadly offensive against alive and in a "reasonable" state of Gaza over the capture of another health. soldier by Palestinian militants three

Iran's leadership

parrage of rocket fire since FROM PAGE 16 Wednesday, including an attack that semi-official Mehr news agency reached as far south as the port city of which is close to the Islamic repub-Haifa. Four people have been killed lic's top national security body. and scores wounded, sending tens of thousands of residents into bomb

Although a number of senior fficials have over the past month spoken out against a freeze, the comments from Rahmani-Fazli -the deputy of Iran's top nuclear negotiator Ali Larijani -- are the first indication that the regime has reached a clear decision. Iran says it only wants to enrich uranium to make reactor fuel, but the process can be extended to make weapons. Western powers believe Iran is trying to build a nuclear bomb under the cover of a peaceful atomic energy programme.

On May 9 last year, the same court acquitted Faruk of charges in the case filed against him in connection with the possession of foreign currencies, as they were not proved. Another court on

accused whether he pleaded quilty or not of the charges brought against him in the three cases. The accused pleaded not guilty and demanded justice before the court. The judge said the prosecution

Police Station SM Naimur Rahman

for exhibiting the seizure lists and

OC had earlier appeared before

the complainant of the case.

When contacted

sion," he said

He regretted that there are no fixed criteria for appointment in the EC and that in the present system the government can appoint anybody the chief of the EC. "As a result, the ruling party has appointed the chief election commissioner according to its choice which is contrary to democracy." he explained.

Ruling BNP leader Ashraf Hossain urged the dialogue organisers to make the initiative a social movement and regretted that foreign diplomats often interfere in the country's politics

The campaign for honest and competent candidates should not end with the 2007 elections, rather it should continue for all elections including those at the local levels, he said.

The BNP leader observed that everybody, including high commands of the political parties. should come under constructive criticism. He urged the media to earn people's confidence and guide the politicians.

Laila Rahman Kabir, former president of MCCI, called upon the people to progress the social and economic trends that have been persisting in the country for the last 15 years.

Explaining the motives of the dialogue, she said the views expressed in the discussion will be reflected in a vision paper and hoped that the government will follow that.

She said the continuation of democracy during the last 15 years is a great achievement for the country and hoped that the country will overcome the existing political deadlock as there is a very active civil society.

She regretted that none of the previous governments could carry out their constitutional responsibilities. "We lost some core areas of democratic practice," she observed

Debapriya Bhattacharya said mere reforms in the EC and caretaker government system might not bring any positive result for development, democracy and good governance in the country.

Reform in the political parties is a must for these, he said, adding, "Leadership of the political parties will remain confined within corrupt and dishonest people if the political parties are not reformed."

Describing the present EC as

president of Begum Rokeya Forum, said, "Politicians play pro-people iust before the election. They talk in such a fashion as if they believe in people's power, but as soon as they are elected, they trample the rights of those very people.' BNP Rangpur district unit

General Secretary Habibunnabi Khan Sohel, Shushwasaner Jonno Nagorik Rangpur unit President Mukul Mostafiz, Awami

Swechhasebak League district Convener Moazzem Hossain Jativa Party district unit Vice-President Syed Noor Ahmed Tulu, General Secretary of Bangladesh Mohila Awami League Rosy

Rahman, JATIYA Samajtantrik Dal district unit President Dr Ekramul Haque Swapan, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal Rangpur unit President Abdul Quddus, Central committee member of Bangladesh Workers Party Nazrul Islam Haqqani, Tapan Chaterjee, among others, participated in the discussion.

Pry teachers FROM PAGE 16

They said the government has a tendency to sidestep the community teachers' demands while fulfilling those of the other teachers' organisations that already enjoy more

President of the association Habibul Ahsan Bablu, Secretary General Hafizur Rahman, Vice President Abu Taher and representatives from across the country were

present at the meeting. Meanwhile, Shikkhak Karmachari Oikya Jote, a forum of non-government teachers and employees, yesterday announced that it will begin an indefinite sit-in on July 23 at city's Muktangan.

The sit-in will continue until the government agrees to meet the public exchequer, read a press release from the organisation.

a rally of Dhaka regional unit teachers at Muktangan today.

to LGRD and Cooperatives Minister

demand is met.

Shaheed Minar premises in the capital from July 17 to 22.

Leaders of Jatiya Shikkhak Karmachari Front, led by Kazi Faruk, and Shikkhak Karmachari Oikya Jote, led by Selim Bhuiyan, who are on the streets with more or less the same demands, said they would invigorate their movement in

the coming days. Meanwhile, Bangladesh Samaitantrik Dal, Samaitantrik Chhatra Front and Pragatishil Chhatra Jote condemned yesterday's police attack on the teachers' rightful movement and called upon the government to meet their demands.

Ganamukti O Jatiya Shampad Raksha Shammilita Andolan, a platform for emancipation of people and protection of national resources, expressing solidarity with the teachers' movement. They would form a human chain at Muktangon in the capital today protesting against the police excess on teachers.

Hamidur's remains

He raised five demands, includ-

ing establishing seven memorial

complexes for the seven war heroes

in their home districts, renaming of

Bangladesh Liberation War Military

Museum, establishing a housing

project for the freedom fighters,

announcing and celebrating a

national day for the seven

The government should make

Margub Murshed, former secretary

of Birsreshtha Hamidur Rahman,

of Birsreshtha Ruhul Amin, Manzur

Rahman, younger brother of

Birsreshtha Mohiuddin Jahangir,

Mostafa Kamal, son of Birsreshtha

Nur Mohammed Sheikh, Munshi

Aiyub Ali, younger brother of

Birsreshtha Munshi Abdur Rauf,

and Mili Rahman, widow of

Birsreshtha Matiur Rahman, were

present at the press conference.

and chief patron of the organisation.

FROM PAGE 1

Birsreshthas.

also facing negligence.

government facilities.

emand for 100 of the salaries from Besides, the Oikya Jote will hold

It will also submit memorandums

Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and some other government high-ups to remind them of their electoral pledge to fulfil the teachers' mands

Bangladesh Shikkhak-Karmachari Samonnoy Parishad, another platform of teachers, in a statement yesterday vowed to continue their movement until their

Assistant Public Prosecutor (APP) Mohammad Jalal Uddin Ahmed told The Daily Star that he had

asked Naimur to appear before the court on August 13 to give his statement

A team of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) along with the then OC of Cantonment Police Station raided Faruk's home at DOHS in the capital around 3:45am on August 18, 1996. They seized a revolver, a shotgun, an airgun, a sten-gun, 616 bullets, eight international passports. 2,830 Pakistani rupees and 62.75 Libvan dinars from the house

Four cases were filed with Cantonment Police Station following the seizure, one under the Arms Act, one under the Foreign Currency Control Act, one under the Explosive Substances Act and the other under the Special Powers Act

Rab man

Amin at the Rupsha ferry ghat is FROM PAGE 1

As the vehicle reached Rayerbagh, the gang members intercepted it and forcibly took the driver away.

Another group then drove the van off the spot and looted the ACs and apparels. They abandoned the the Bangladesh Military Museum as vehicle in Rupganj under Narayanganj and police recovered it

> On information from the van driver, police and Rab-10 personnel started a joint drive and arrested Bazlur from his house in Demra on Friday night.

The law enforcers also hauled arrangements so that people from some Rab informers and quizzed all walks of life can pay their homage them along with Bazlur. "At one to the war heroes, said Syed stage of the night-long grilling, Rab Corporal Bazlur admitted his involvement in the looting," said Investigation Officer of the case Fazlur Rahman, younger brother Sub-inspector of Demra police Humayun Kabir. Nurjahan Begum, eldest daughter

Acting on Bazlur's statement, police and Rab later arrested Shaheen from his Janata Housing residence at Mirpur. Police arrested two other members of the gang --Didar and Anwar from Tongi-- and recovered 22 looted ACs from a warehouse at Ashulia.

They also held three others. The joint team of law enforcers recovered many of the looted apparheaded for the spot to retrieve hidden arms and arrest his

As they reached the village Ram Majhi, Mithu's gang opened fire on the team. The police team returned fire leading to a 20minute gunfight between the two parties. During the battle, Mithu tried to escape but he was caught

spot Police recovered one doublebarrel gun, three live shells and two rifle bullets from the spot.

in the line of fire. He died on the

Inspector Ahsan of district SB said the slain outlaw was wanted in connection with five criminal cases including one murder case filed with Terokheda Police Station.

District SB sources said Mithu surrendered to police with two firearms in 1999 taking advantage of the amnesty declared by the Awami League government.

els from a house at Rupshi in

Narayanganj. "We're still continuing

our drive and hope to recover all the

looted goods from the area." IO

Humavun said when contacted last

Manikur Rahman said Corporal

punished as per rules," he told The

members have been punished on

charge of involvement in corruption.

Rab sources said so far 267 Rab

Director of Rab-10 Lt Colonel

night.

duty on July 26.

Dailv Star

After coming to the brink of war in 2002, India and Pakistan began a peace process that has brought them closer, yet concrete agree ment on the most pressing issue the Himalayan region of Kashmir has been minimal

Investigators have cast a wide net for the Mumbai bombers, focusing on the Kashmiri Lashkar-e-Tayyaba militant group, along with smaller homegrown organisations. Lashkar, based in Pakistan, has denied involvement.

Police have named three men wanted in the bombings Sayyad Zabiuddin, Zulfeqar Fayyaz and a man known only as Rahil but released few details about them. Indian news reports said all three were members of Lashkar-e-Tayyaba

Fresh agitation

FROM PAGE 16 Swadhin Bangla Garments Sramik Karmochari Federation, said according to the agreement the factory authorities were to issue identity cards and appointment letters to the workers within July 12 and allow three-month maternity leave with pay, but none of those were implemented as of yesterday. She urged Dr Kamal Hossain to

look into the matter of serious violations of law by the garment factory owners.

Bazlur Rashid was on a 21-day About legal assistance to the leave and was supposed to join his garment workers, Dr Kamal said, "I have been doing this as a lawyer, "Bazlur confessed his involvenot as a politician. ment in the looting and he will be

He listened to the leaders of the 16 organisations that represent the workers of about 2,500 garment factories and inquired if they have good coordination among themselves

Both the garment owners and workers have contribution to the survival of the garment industry of the country despite many global challenges, he said, adding that the skill of the workers should be specially recognised.

Dr Kamal inquired about the chronology of meetings with the industry owners and original documents of the agreements between the workers and the owners.

Gono Forum leaders Mostafa Mohsin Montu and Mesbahuddin Ahmed were also present at the meeting.

shelters or fortified rooms

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has said the offensive would end if its soldiers were released, Hezbollah halts rocket attacks and is disarmed a demand outlined in a Security Council resolution.

Northern Israel has been hit by a

Lebanon remains virtually cut off from the outside world after Israel imposed an air and sea blockade, launched repeated strikes on its only

Quadruplets FROM PAGE 16

down and received injuries.

"The babies are premature as they were delivered early," Jahan said adding that Nilufer's scheduled delivery date was later this month. She said lack of nutritious diet during her pregnancy also contributed to the children being born underweight.

Child Specialist of BSMMU MS Khaled told The Daily Star the babies were underweight and their condition may deteriorate if proper care is not provided.

"Even though the condition of the quadruplets is stable nothing could be said before 72 hours," he added.

Nilufer, who hails from Debidwar of Comilla, had an ultra sonogram performed on her at a local hospital six months into her pregnancy. The ultra sonogram report revealed of her being pregnant with quadruplets.

The doctor asked her to have the delivery in Dhaka to be better prepared for complications that may arise before, during and after deliv-

She admitted at Ad-Din Hospital in Moghbazar in the capital in June. Ad-Din Hospital, taking extra precaution, referred her to BSMMU.

Nilufer, who is a mother of eight now, gave birth to her first child 16 years ago. Her family members said they were very happy to have the quadruplets.

"It's a moment of joy for us, we now have two brothers in the family, said the 16-year-old eldest sister of the new-borns.

Hospital sources said birth of quadruplets is indeed a very rare incident and there are less than 100 quadruplets in the world. The last known quadruplets in Bangladesh were born at Ad-Din Hospital in August, 2004

Nevertheless, the official said Iran was "continuing to examine the offer" -- which was drawn up by Britain, China, France, Germany Russia and the United States and handed to Tehran on June 6.

The package offers trade, technology, diplomatic and other incentives as well as multilateral talks -also involving the United States -- if Iran agrees to freeze enrichment.

In the absence of an Iranian reply, the so-called 5+1 group of nations on Wednesday decided to send the matter back to the UN Security Council -- which has the power to make a suspension legally binding and impose sanctions if Iran continues enrichina.

Diplomats say the Council could vote as early as next week on a draft resolution that would make a freeze mandatory -- although Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday emphasised the need for more diplomacy.

"We're not going to take part in any crusades, any holy unions... but our common aim is to make the world a safer place," Putin said after meeting US counterpart George W. Bush ahead of the G8 summit in Saint Petersburg.

"We are going to come up with common approaches to this common problem," Putin said at a press conference.

Iran resumed enrichment in January, and has already ignored a non-binding Security Council demand for the work to stop pending

the result of an IAEA probe. The Vienna-based agency says that after more than three years of nspections it is still not in a position to say whether Iran is seeking nuclear energy or weapons.

The regime's hardline leaders have repeatedly said they are willing to ease concerns over their atomic activities, but are unwilling to accept any "preconditions".

BR to procure FROM PAGE 1 Dhaka-Sylhet routes, he said. "If we can provide good customer service at reasonable ticket price and maintain time schedules. the air-conditioned express train must be profitable as passengers

still prefer train to any other mode of transportation," the BR official said. He said the authorities have also a plan to introduce some new ser-

vices with the new coaches.