Janata tower fine

Kader Newaz of the Second Additional District and Sessions Judge's court filed case with the GCO against Ershad for realisation of Tk 2,74,35,400, as fine imposed

But the case was stayed following an order of the High Court and the stay was vacated on June 15 this year.

Meantime, Delwara Begum expressed her dissatisfaction over a report published in the daily Samakal yesterday titled "Ershad don't have to pay the rest of the

Talking to the The Daily Star, she said that the report was false, fabricated and baseless and wondered how the newspaper got the order and published it one day before the passing of it.

CASE AGAINST RAWSHAN ERSHAD

Another Dhaka court fixed today for decision on the petition filed by Rawshan Ershad against the attachment of 12 kathas of land along with its 14-storied building

"Janata Tower" at Karwan Bazar and her residence at Gulshan situated on 33 decimal land.

After hearing both the sides on the petition filed on July 16. Judge Khondaker Hassan Mohammad Firoz of Artharin Adalat-2 passed

directed Rawshan and five others to pay Tk 5,0987,472.65 against the house loan of Tk 3.5 crore taken from the Motijheel branch of Uttara Bank Limited, in 1990.

and five others to pay the decreed money within 60 days from the day of delivery of the verdict. If they fail to pay, the bank can realise the money from them as per law, the court added.

bank filed a suit claiming Tk 9,99,64279.65 with interest as Rawshan and others failed to pay up within the stipulated time. The bank also gave the schedules of lands on Janata Tower and Rawshan's residence of Gushan area for

Asia Energy staff

of the railroad between Dinajpur and

Parbatipur, severely disrupting the rail communications.

They halted the Nilphamari-

of blazing tyres and timbers.

They attacked houses of some 'collaborators' working for the Asia least seven houses of employees of

Besides, a rice mill, some structures of Asian Energy and several television sets that it had donated to

ple for giving rent to Asian Energy, but later the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) rescued them.

At around noon, UNO Hassan Sarwar asked the people to call off the strike as the company has been shut down as wanted by the protes-

Meanwhile, Ataur Rahman of Kushyapur under Birampur upazila yesterday was identified to be among the people killed in police actions. Locals claimed that six more are still missing. They are Akkas Ali, 22, Yunus Ali, 26, Bappi, 17, Pradip Roy, 26, Dulal Hossain, 25. Abdul Al Mamun, 25, Bipul Sarkar, 16, and Muhammad Saleur,

Some locals expressed anger at the Dinajpur-5 Awami League lawmaker not visiting the spot yet.

"We want a government declaration cancelling the coalmine project," said Aminul Islam Bablu, one of the district committee leaders. He said they will continue the strike until the government announces to meet the locals' demands.

"I have already communicated the message to my superiors and now waiting for their actions," the DC said.

"Meantime, I will sit again with the district committee leaders and try to calm them down so that normalcy returns to the locality," he

A one-member committee with ADM of Dinajpur Kazi Hasan Ahmed at the helm has been formed to

place, which will destroy the total area.

But how to save Phulbari town having

The company estimates that

depths of between 120 metres and

plan within this year, Asia Energy can

tonnes in 2008-09, nine million tonnes

in 2009-10 and finally 15 million tonnes

If the government approves the

Rehabilitation issue

these buildings would not be dismantled at one go. "The mining will progress in phases. When mining in one part of the area is complete, miners will doned part of the mine will then be rehabilitated."

About 1,000 telephone lines of the BTTB will also be shifted from the mine area, sources said.

Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral

that only 40,000 people, including 2,000 indigenous ones.

Phulbari upazila spans over 229.55 square km and the upazila town 16.03 square km. About 207 square km of land in the upazila is cultivable and about 23 square km of land fallow.

Phulbari upazila covers 16.1282 square km while Phulbari town spans over 3.5289 square km.

The national committee says the company gave these false statistics to

According to the district forest department, more than 4 lakh trees, including eucalyptus, shishu, neem, mango, jackfruit, blackberry, coconut and bamboo will have to be axed if the project is implemented.

Asia Energy admitted about 10 km of broad-gauge rail track in Phulbari needs to be relocated and the course of the river Punarbhaba will be changed.

Moreover, the mining project will cause decline of underground water level in Phulbari and adjacent areas, resulting in extinction of 3,200 acres of forest, the national committee leaders

said. Fifty educational institutions, including six colleges and 18 madrasas, out of 169 educational institutions in Phulbari and its adjacent areas will also have be dismantled. Besides, 171 mosques, 13 temples and other religious establishments will also be removed, sources men-

Environmentalists have decried granting of the forestland and densely populated area for coal mining purposes. It would set a bad example and others would also demand such areas for various purposes on the plea of community welfare, they observed.

"We know the coalmine project will be implemented here in our ancestral

the order

The same court on July 12, 2004

The court also directed Rawshan

On January 13 last year, the

bound Titumir Express coming from Rajshahi at 6:30am, and Rupsha, another express train operating between Syedpur and Khulna, at 9:20am.

The agitators also barricaded Birampur-Joynagar Road with piles

local residents, branding them as Energy (Bangladesh) Pvt Ltd. At the British company were set on fire.

different local organisations were They also allegedly beat a cou-

probe into Saturday's killings.

a heritage of 300 years is our main concern," said Abdul Hamid, a local. Under the coal development policy, 1993, the government will get only six percent royalty from Asia Energy and different types of taxes. In terms of money. this will stand at \$200

million if the company produces 15 million tonnes of coal a year. According to the National Phulbari reserve has 572 million tonnes of high quality coal, enough to

Resources, Electricity and Port, 4,70,000 people, including 50,000 generate 8.000 MW power for 30 indigenous people, of 100 villages in vears. The coal is located at varying Phulbari upazila, its adjacent areas and part of the upazila town will have to be relocated for the mining. More than 4,000 people live in each village. Disputing this, Asia Energy claims start production of 1.5 million tonnes of coal in fiscal 2007-08, six million

According to district land office,

from 2011-12. It will employ 1,200 to 1,500 people and deploy trucks that can carry up to 350 tonnes of coal each. Digging machines to be deployed there will Asia Energy however claims that pick up 50 tonnes of coal each, accord-

Opposing Asia Energy's mining get the deal for the mining project.

plan, many local energy experts had earlier said the six-percent royalty under the coal development policy should be immediately revised as it undermines the high value of coal in the present context of high price of

Phulbari killing

FROM PAGE 16 No academic activities were held at Dhaka University (DU) and other public universities and colleges. However, most primary and high schools in the city remained open.

Some pro-strike leaders and activists entered the DU central library during the strike, forced students out and took position at the entrance.

Ruling BNP's student wing Jativatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) men, who oppose the strike, later took control of the library area and

In the morning, Chhatra Sangram Parishad, led by Awami League's student front Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), PCJ and Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU) organised separate processions and rallies on DU campus

JCD also brought out a procession and held a rally opposing the strike at educational institutions. The student strike was peace-

fully observed at Raishahi University, Chittagong University and Jahangirnagar University.

JMB militant

FROM PAGE 1 possessing firearms and ammunition while 20 years' RI for possessing explosives.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence completed their arguments and the court recorded statements of 17 prosecution witnesses in the two

Following the confessional statement of Jewel, Gazipur police raided a graveyard at Dakkhin Khan under Joydevpur Police Station on January 8 this year and recovered the arms ammunition and bomb-making mate-

The cache included three kilograms of gunpowder, one pistol, one foreign and two country-made shooter guns, 16 bullets, five cartridges and

Two cases, one under the Arms Act and other under Explosive Substances Act. were filed the next

The investigation officer pressed charges against Jewel on March 9. On June 29, the court framed charges against him and the trial began on July

CASEAGAINST SUNNY

Another Dhaka court yesterday examined statements of prosecution witnesses in an August 17 blast case filed for an explosion near Airport.

The accused in the case, JMB military commander Ataur Rahman Sunny and two others were present in the court and pleaded not guilty and

Judge ŚM Mojibur Rahman of the First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court read out statements of 47 prosecution witnesses Three other accused in the case

Mostafizur Rahman Musa, Habibur Rahman and Sagir Hossain are still at

CPD trustees FROM PAGE 1

A Dhaka court on August 9 issued arrest warrants against the five following a defamation suit filed by Mahmudur, also executive chairman of the Board of Investment (Bol).

The accused are noted economis and CPD Chairman Prof Rehman Sobhan, CPD Executive Director Debapriya Bhattacharya, its trustee board members -- former adviser to a caretaker government Syed Manzur Elahi, former finance minister M Syeduzzaman, and former president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce And Industry (MCCI) Laila

Rahman Kabir. The HC granted them ad interim anticipatory bail on August 10.

Dr Kamal Hossain and Dr M Zahir resterday moved for the petitioners They were assisted by advocate Ramzan Ali Sikder.

Petitioners submitted that the allegations brought against them by Mahmudur Rahman are fabricated and baseless as he fails to attribute to any particular petitioner any statement which may be construed to be defamatory and as such the entire proceedings are gross abuse of process of the

"Even if the complaint is taken to be true the alleged defamatory statement does not constitute an offence under section 500 of the Penal Code since the complaint is vaque and lacking in material substance, and as such the roceedings are manifestly of process of the court in order to harass the petitioners," reads the

Petitioners said that from the surrounding circumstances of the case it is apparent that the complainant had acted in gross abuse of power in procuring warrants of arrest against them and this particular aspect of the matter makes it clear that the entire proceedings have been initiated for

vindictive and mala fide purpose. Five citizens said the case filed by Mahmudur Rahman should be guashed to secure ends of justice.

Saitur's ministries

FROM PAGE 1 allocation and 50 per cent of the project aid.

Saifur Rahman gave a direction to secretaries of different ministries. about smooth implementation of projects in the coming days while the present government's tenure expires in October, sources said.

He asked the secretaries to go ahead with the ongoing projects and take necessary steps for quick approval of 429 new projects. Ending the meeting at the NEC

conference room. Saifur told the newsmen that different ministries feel comfortable spending local money than foreign aid. There is strict monitoring of fund utilisation by the donors while supervision of the spending of

public funds by the government is lax he said. "For spending foreign aid there are some conditions and the donors look into various matters, like procurement, appointment of consul-

tant and project profile," he added. He came down heavily on the high officials, especially the secretaries, for their lack of knowledge about expending project money, which is one of the major causes of slow progress in project implementation.

Secretaries, especially the newcomers, often refer to not getting money, Saifur said, adding, "But they do not even know that while we place the budget, they can spend money for three instalments without taking any permission from the finance ministry for approved proiects."

Saifur also criticised the tendency to finish the projects hurriedly at the end of the fiscal year, and said many such projects earlier failed to maintain required quality.

Mourning day

Wearing black badges and carrying black flags, hundreds of the people from all walks of life gathered at the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital yesterday and observed a twominutes silence to commemorate the dead as part of the countrywide mourning programme.

The committee's Member Secretary Anu Muhammad said the northern part of the country would turn into a desert if open-pit mining were done in Phulbari.

He also said people tried to law siege to the office of AEC in Phulbari peacefully but law enforcers intercepted the demonstrators about halfa-kilometre from the AEC office. The police and BDR fired shots to kill the participants of the programme when they were starting to return.

"The law enforcers opened fire on agitated people without any provocation," alleged Anu Muhammad, also a professor of the department of economics at Jahangirnagar University.

Eminent academician Serajul Islam Chowdhury said thousands of people in the area will be without shelters, while the environment and water level in the surrounding areas will be seriously damaged if the AEC extracts coal by open-pit mining method.

Committee Convenor Engineer Shahidullah presided over the mourning rally where Communist Party General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim, Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal Convenor Khalekuzzaman, leftist leader Nirmal Sen and members of civil society were

Activists of Awami League's student wing Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), Workers Party, Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB). Bandladesh Samaitantrik Dal (BSD) and Ganomukti Andolan also participated in the rally.

investigation into the killings, punishment for the people responsible and compensation for the injured and families of the deceased. The committee also expressed solidarity with the locals call for indefi-

nite hartal in Phulbari and its adjacent

The committee also demanded

A mourning procession was brought out following the rally that marched different streets of the capi-

Seven human rights and environment organisations yesterday condemned the excessive use of force and killing of demonstrators in Phulbari. They issued a protest statement signed by Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) Executive Director Sultana Kamal, Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD) Executive Director Shamsul Huda, Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association (Bela) Director Syeda Rezwana Hassan. Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (Blast) Executive Director Taslimur Rahman, Centre for Sustainable Development (CFSD) Secretary General Mahfuz Ullah, Nari Pakkha Convener Maheen Sultana and Nijera Kari Co-ordinator Khushi Kabir.

They urged the government to cancel the open-pit-mining in Phulbari area for the greater interest of the country.

Different political, social, cultural, human rights and environmental organisations including Dhaka University Teachers Association (Duta), Bangladesh Sramajibi Kendra, Society of Justice, Environment and Social Development Organisation, Bangladesh Chhatra Union. Bandladesh Jubo Union, Gono Mukti Andolan, Bangladesh Awami Jubo League. National Front of Teachers and Employees, left-leaning five-party and Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) demanded investigation into the killings, punishment for the people responsible and compensation for the injured and families of the deceased.

Militant case

FROM PAGE 16 Additional Sessions Judge on May

29 in Jhalakathi judges killing case. The JMB killed Sohel Ahmed senior assistant judge of Nalchhiti upazila, and Jagannath Pandev senior assistant judge of Jhalakathi sadar upazila, in a bomb attack on the judges' vehicle at Chandkathi in Jhalakathi on November 14 last

Besides Abdur Rahman and Bangla bhai, others to walk the gallows are JMB Majlish-e-Shura members Ataur Rahman Sunny Abdul Awal and Khaled Saifullah suicide bomber Iftekhar Hasan Al Mamun and Asadur Rahman Arif. All

except Arif are in jail. Hearing of the death reference case started on August 1 and completed on August 23.

Over 100 hurt

stopped the bus coming from Chapainawabganj but the driver told them not to waste time. The driver argued that they were carrying a patient in the bus and some passen-

gers were to catch an intercity train. At one stage of the quarrel, the driver, Abdur Razaak, slapped a policeman. The police then detained him along with his helper

Milon and beat them up mercilessly As the news spread in the city, angry transport workers from Rajshahi Bus Terminal attacked a nearby police outpost at around 5:00pm. They beat up several policemen and set ablaze a motorcycle of sergeant Shahin in front of the outpost.

Later, additional contingent of police reached the spot and fired shots to disperse the transport workers pelting stones at the law enforcers. They also damaged buses and roadside shops

Police said they have brought the situation under control. But a tense situation was prevailing in the bus terminal and adjacent areas when this report was being filed at 8.45pm.

Bus Owner Association Joint

Secretary Nazrul Islam Helal said they have already began a transport strike and it would continue till the responsible policemen were punished.

Critically injured driver and helper of the bus and restaurant owner Murad were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH). Twelve policemen were admitted to Rajshahi Police Lines Hospital and five others at the

The injured include Sub-Inspector SM Zaman, ASI Abdul Gani, Sergeant Akram, Havildar Yad Ali, constables Shakhawat Proshanta, Waliul, Rezwan, Mahbub, Nahid, Farhad, Kalam, Selim Reza, Harunur Rashid, Mamun, Shamim, Sariful and police driver Alamair.

The injured journalists are Azhar Uddin of the daily Prothom Alo Shamsur Rahman Rumi of the daily Arthoniti, Abul Kalam Azad of the daily Samachar, and photojournalist Shahidul Islam Dukhu of Natun

Oil, Gas exploration

existing data, we have little to offer

The government last year considered floating a tender for a speculative survey of the Bay of Bengal. This survey would have helped the government identify exploration

blocks on the basis of energy poten-

tials and get a primary impression

on geological aspects of the bay.

But the idea never got matured, and

a senior cabinet member opposed

the move when a vested interest lobby put pressure to award the deal to a certain company. The government in its recent exercises, which includes updating the model PSC (production sharing contract), is considering revision of

the incentive package for investors. The previous incentives included exemption of corporate tax. This puts heavy financial burden on Petrobangla that pays 40 per cent corporate tax on behalf of the oil companies. "We are trying to drop this incentive and instead give the investors 10-year tax holiday," said The government is also updating

the standard for bidder's minimum

commitment of work programme and incorporated the provision of abandonment of exploration activities in the updated PSC. The proposed blocks are of around 24.000 square kilometres. Some parts of at least two blocks may be disputable as India has

floated its sixth round oil and gas

block bid, in which at least two blocks are visibly situated within Bangladesh waters. The bid closes

on September 15. The other major issue for Bangladesh is the accidental discovery of oolite carbonate rocks in the coastal waters during a scientific survey in June-July. Oolite carbonate rocks hold oil potential. Proper survey of that area might give Bangladesh further understanding of the potential, which can help the country bag a better deal from

The then BNP government in the early nineties floated the first round block bid. But at that time there was no open tender, and the government signed a PSC with British company Cairn and two PSCs with American company Occidental. The negotiation process lingered for around The Awami League government

floated the second round bid in

and competitive. But the negotia-

tions lingered for three years as some influential quarters within the government tried to award PSCs to lesser qualified companies "The point is, behind the formalities, all negotiations need strong political will. And it also demands

time." an official pointed out.

ETV equipment

FROM PAGE 16 after the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court upheld a verdict of the High Court Division declaring the licence of the ETV illegal.

ETV's transmission equipment was also removed with the help of police the following day.

On a writ petition filed by the ETV for getting back the transmission equipment and licence, a division bench of the High Court gave judgement on August 20, 2003 directing the government to return the seized equipment by 30 days.

After declaring illegal the ETV and its transmission, the authorities took steps to gag the voice of the management and workers, which still continues, an ETV press release signed by Director (Programmes) Atiqul Haq Chowdhury said yesterday.

Despite having all necessary preparations, the Ekushey Television cannot resume broadcast due to the whims of the ministry concerned, it said.

"We do not know whether there is any instance in the world of a TV channel's waiting four years for broadcasting. Although new TV channels started broadcasting one after another, the authorities' role in the case of ETV was biased and undemocratic," the press release

The ETV staff will observe a token sit-in programme in front of the ETV office at Karwan Bazar at noon today to protest closure of the popular private TV channel.

4 cops murder

FROM PAGE 16 nab them. As the team reached near Ratoil bridge, the outlaws opened fire on the law enforcers prompting them to fire back

After a 10-minute long gunfight the outlaws fled the scene

The Rab members found the body of Joban about 15 yards of the bridge after searching the area with assistance of the local people. He was accused in three murder

cases in Shingra and Bagmara police stations. A revolver and two bullets were also retrieved from the scene.

CNG scam charge

FROM PAGE 1

The probe committee convenor Nadim Mostafa, who is also a ruling party lawmaker, again has sought more time and said he would submit the investigation report by September 1

"We will take the decision on it in

the next meeting after receiving the

minister's statement and report of the subcommittee," committee Chairman Syed Manjur Hossain told The Daily Star after the meeting at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban. Sources said the convener of the subcommittee Nadim Mostafa at

yesterday's meeting sought three

more days to submit their report to the probe committee. The subcommittee was formed on January 7, 2004 after the ruling party lawmakers raised allegations against the communications minister for being involved in a price monopoly by Uttara Motors. Uttara Motors was selling each CNG (compressed natural gas) autorickshaw for up to Tk 3.67 lakh -

 up from the actual price of Tk 1.67 The minister, however, has always been denying the allega-

The subcommittee headed by Nadim Mostafa has been taking advantage of time extensions for the last two years to place the report to the probe committee and it did not submit its report once again at the standing committee meeting yester-

The parliamentary body also formed another subcommittee to probe the allegations of corruption in allocation of land for setting up

CNG gas stations. Surprisingly, no subcommittee came up with their reports vesterday and they could not provide any

reason of their delays.

Fazil, Kamil FROM PAGE 1

Minister's Office (PMO) endorsed the drafts of the Madrasa Education (Amendment) Act 2006 and the National University (Amendment) Act 2006 to bring the Fazil and Kamil Madrasas under the National University.

The meeting also approved the

draft of the Asian University for

Women Act 2006 to establish the varsity in Chittagong for Asian women. In another major step, the cabinet endorsed the draft of the Padma Multipurpose Bridge (Land Acquisition) Act 2006 to acquire

land for construction of the pro-

posed bridge. It also approved the draft of the Bangladesh Labour Act 2006 to amend and coordinate with existing laws concerning appointment of workers, owner-worker relation, 1998. For the first time, it was open rate of minimum wages, payment of wages, formation of trade union industrial dispute settlement and health, and security of workers.

> Besides, the meeting approved a proposal for ratification of the Saarc Limited Multilateral Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation and Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters.

Annan in Beirut

forces deployed in the south, but warned that the peacekeepers

should not seek to take away their weapons. "We have no problem with Unifil as long as its mission is not aimed at disarming Hezbollah," Nasrallah

said in an interview aired Sunday on

Lebanese television. Much of southern Lebanon lies in ruins after Israel's 34-day offensive against Hezbollah fighters, whose July 12 capture of two Israeli soldiers sparked the devastating fighting that left at least 1.287 dead in Lebanon, nearly all of them civilians, as well as 160 Israelis, mostly

soldiers. In the interview, Nasrallah said he would never have ordered the soldiers' capture had he foreseen the severity of the Israeli response.

Annan's visit follows Europe's pledge of up to 7,000 troops to form the core of a strengthened peacekeeping mission capable of shoring up the tenuous truce between Israel and Hezbollah Half of the European Union

troops are expected to be deployed rapidly, with some 200 French engineers and troops arriving at the weekend to pave the way for the larger force. France, Lebanon's former colonial power, is to lead the force with

2 000 troops until February of next vear, when it will be taken over by Italy, which is contributing up to 3.000 troops. Mohammed Chatah. Siniora's top adviser, told AFP at the weekend that Lebanon also planned to raise the issue of Israel's continuing sea

a violation of Security Council Resolution 1701 and "is punishing the entire population". "As far as Lebanon is concerned, Israel must withdraw immediately

and air blockade, which he said was

Lebanon, he said. He said Siniora would also bring up the disputed Shebaa Farms area during his discussion with Annan.

The territory, located at the

iunction of Lebanon, Syria and

Israel, was captured by the Jewish

and without delay" from south

state as part of the Syrian Golan Heights during the 1967 war. It is now claimed by Lebanon with the approval of Syria in an arrangement that is not recognised

by the United Nations. Annan was expected to visit Syria on Thursday as well as its main ally Iran on Saturday, in a break with US-led diplomacy in the region, which had left Hezbollah's main foreign backers out in the cold.

The militant group still holds the

two Israeli soldiers it captured and

Nasrallah said that contacts had

begun through the Lebanese parliament speaker to broker an exchange for Arab prisoners held by Israel. "Negotiations on a prisoner exchange began recently," the Hezbollah leader said, adding that

the United Nations and Italy had

both expressed an interest in helping to mediate Israeli officials, who have publicly insisted the soldiers must be freed without precondition, denied they were involved in negotiations with Hezbollah, public radio

reported. On Tuesday, Annan is to visit the UN peacekeeping force's headquarters in the coastal town of Nagura, hard by the Israeli border.

Minister Tzipi Livni said yesterday

before heading on to Israel. Meanwhile, Israeli Foreign

Steinmeier said he was confident that the rules of engagement for the international force could be hammered out this week and expected "decisive steps forward" at a conference for nations contributing troops Monday in New York.

the beefed-up international force in

southern Lebanon must enforce an

arms embargo against Hezbollah

"by all means necessary", calling it

the top priority in securing the fragile

her German counterpart Frank-

Walter Steinmeier that the conflict

would certainly flare again if the

Shia militia's arms supply were not

important thing," she said, adding

release of two of its soldiers, who

were captured by the militia in a

deadly cross-border raid in July, as

a better future (for) the region don't

want to come back to the situation

that we faced in the last years since

Israel withdrew from Lebanon." she

said, adding that Hezbollah had

used the six-year period to rearm

with the help of Iran and Syria.

"I know that those who believe in

part of a lasting truce.

that Israel also demanded the

"The arms embargo is the most

Livni said in Berlin after talks with

ceasefire.

Press reports over the weekend said Germany could send about 1,200 military personnel but Steinmeier declined to comment on

the figure. European Union states have pledged nearly 7,000 troops, nearly half the number needed to bring the UN Interim Force in Lebanon to the 15.000 envisaged under UN Security Council Resolution 1701 that paved the way for a now twoweek-old ceasefire.

Germany has pledged to deploy a small naval unit to patrol the coastline and stop the flow of arms but has ruled out sending combat troops or police out of sensitivity to Israel where memories of the Holocaust are still fresh. Lebanon had also requested

for its border police at frontier checkpoints and airports. Livni was to meet with Chancellor Angela Merkel and members of parliament later Monday and lay a wreath at the Grunewald train station from which

technical assistance from Germany

the first Berlin Jews were sent to the Nazi death camps.

Chemical plant FROM PAGE 1

"We have extinguished the fire, but we will continue to monitor the plant for some time because a flame might re-ignite from chemicals," said Anwar Hossain, station officer of EPZ fire-fighting unit. "The cause of the fire is yet to be detected."

Mohammad, Abu Sayeed, Abu Bakar Siddik and Tofazzal Hossain -- were injured extinguishing the "Nothing is left," said Jashim Uddin. vice-chairman of Bengal

Four firefighters -- Deen

plant has been collapsed and destroyed in the fire, causing a loss of about Tk 10 to 12 crore." "The fire might have originated from an electric short circuit, but an

Group of Industries. "The entire

investigation is required to unearth the cause of the fire" he added. BACPL was established in an area of 35,000 square feet at Zirabo in Ashulia and employs about 150

2003, according to an Associated

Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's claim

that government forces were prevail-

ing over insurgents and sectarian

never be in a civil war," he said through

an interpreter on CNN television

Sunday. "The violence is in decrease

His statement came on a day when

Iraq saw a string of bombings and

shooting across the country. In one of

the deadliest attacks, a group of

assailants in three cars opened fire at

an open-air night market in Khalis, a

mostly Shia town 80km north of

Baghdad, killing 23 people and

wounding 25 others, the town's hospi-

A suicide bomber on a minibus

near the Palestine Hotel in central

Baghdad killed eight civilians and

wounded 18, the Iraqi government

said, while two back-to-back suicide

car bombings in the northern city of

Kirkuk killed nine people hours after

another suicide car bomb killed one

480km southeast of Baghdad, a

motorcycle bomb at a night market

Sunday killed four people and

wounded 15, the governor's office

In Basra, Iraq's second largest city,

tal and police said.

and our security ability is increasing.'

The renewed violence undercut

"We're not in a civil war. Iraq will

Press Count.

extremists.

Iraq launches

FROM PAGE 16

Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari.

al-Sadr, whose movement holds 30 of the 275 seats in parliament and five Cabinet posts. Al-Sadr's backing also helped al-Maliki win the top job during painstaking negotiations within the Shia alli-

ance that led to the ouster of Prime

Al-Sadr mounted two major upris-

ings against the American-led coalition

in 2004 when US authorities closed his newspaper and pushed an Iragi judge into issuing an arrest warrant against But American forces have also been wary of confronting the Mahdi Army because of al-Sadr's clout over

the government and his large following among Shias, who are in a majority in Some 10,000 Iraqis have been killed in the last four months alone in unrelenting attacks by Sunni and Shia extremists on each other's communities, as well as bombings and shoot

inas by Sunni Arab insuraents.

In Baghdad, a car suicide bomber slammed into a police checkpoint outside the Interior Ministry in midmorning Monday, when traffic is usually heavy. The blast could be heard a mile away, and smoke could be seen rising from the scene. The blast killed 14 people, including eight policemen, police 1st Lt. Ahmed Mohammed Ali said. He said 17 policemen were among the wounded.

Elsewhere in the capital, a road-

side bomb in the mainly Sunni western neighbourhood of Jihad struck a car transporting five barbershop workers killed one person and seriously wounded another four, police Lt Maitham Abdul-Razzaq said. The US military said eight US soldiers were killed Saturday and

Sunday in and around Baghdad

seven of them by roadside bombs and

one by gunfire. More than 2,600 US

military personnel have died since the

100 injured FROM PAGE 16 of south Keraniganj Police Station and damaged at least 10 passing

enforcers, leaving over 100 people injured. The injured were admitted to

a fierce clash with the law-

local hospital and clinics.

vehicles As police went to remove the barricades, the AL men locked into

beginning of the Iraq war in March