### Death sentence to 7 JMB

FROM PAGE 1 In the quickest disposal of a case in the history of Bangladesh, the trial of the sensational case for the first suicide bomb attack in the country was completed in just 131 days from framing of the charges in the lower

Senior assistant judges Jagannath Pandey and Sohel Ahmed were killed in the suicide bomb attack at Purba Chadkati in Jhalakathi town on November 14 last year in the wake of a series of bombings by the militants

across the country.
On May 29, Additional District and Sessions Judge of Jhalakathi Reza Tarik Ahmed ordered for hanging the seven JMB men, including its chief Abdur Rahman and his top aide Siddigul Islam alias Bangla Bhai, until death and acquitted one.

Other convicts in the case are JMB Majlish-e-Shura members Ataur Rahman Sunny, Abdul Awal and Faruk Hossain Khan alias Khaled Saifullah, suicide bombers Iftekhar Hasan Al Mamun and absconding Asadul Islam alias Arif.

The additional sessions judge did not commit any illegality by handing death sentences on the seven accused. There is no ground to interfere in the judgment passed by the additional sessions judge Jhalakathi," the HC bench comprising Justice Ali Asgar Khan and Justice Emdadul Haque said while confirming the death sentence in a crowded courtroom yesterday.

Security was beefed up on the Supreme Court premises yesterday but no special security was arranged for the two judges who delivered the

They [the seven convicts] carried out terrorist activities in the name of Islam. Islam does not support terror-ist activities," the court said, adding that the prosecution has proved the case beyond reasonable doubt.

The court pronounced its decision around 12:45pm on completion of passing the judgment that started on Tuesday. After a day's adjournment, the court resumed yesterday.

Expressing his satisfaction over the HC decision, state lawyer Deputy Attorney General Helal Uddin Mollah told The Daily Star, "No other country in the world has succeeded completing trials of militants in such a short

The verdict will glorify Bangladesh's image abroad. It has also proved that the judiciary in Bangladeshis independent, he said.

The quick trial and verdict proves that Bangladesh does not support any militant activities in the name of Islam," said Helal Uddin. He said the verdict can be exe-

cuted within the tenure of the govern-ment if the convicts do not appeal against the verdict with the Appellate Division in 30 days.

"If anyone appeals, the matter will remain pending at the Appellate Division. But those who will not appeal within the supulated time can be hanged after 30 days," he said.

The state lawyers believe none of the convicts will appeal against the HC decision as all of them said after the trial court judgment that they will not move for appealing against the verdict because they did not acknowledge the trial held by a "Taguti" (non-Islamic) court and not by an Islamic jury board. After the trial court verdict, six of

the seven convicts did not appeal against it. Only Mamun appealed through the jail authority but the HC did not grant his appeal.
As they did not appoint any coun-

sel, the government appointed three state defence lawyers for the seven. Advocate Muhammad

Salahuddin, one of the state defence lawyers, declined to make any comment on the HC decision. "Our main task was to see whether the prosecu tion produced the evidence properly before the court to prove the charges against the accused beyond doubt," he said.

"I have tried to point out the anomalies and flaws in the evidence,"

While delivering the order, the HC bench, however, said, "Contention of the defence lawyer is not sustainable in the eve of law.

Investigation officer of the case Special Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Munshi Atiqur Rahman of Criminal Investigation Department, who was present at the court yesterday, also expects that the verdict will be executed during the tenure of the present government.

entences, he said, "Their names will be excluded from the charge sheets."

Asked if hanging them will hamper the investigation and trial of the other militant cases, Munshi Atiq replied in the negative, saying, "They have already made their statement." WHATNEXT

Inder article 103 of the constitution, the seven condemned prisoners must individually file appeal, if they want to, before the Appellate Division. The time for such appeal under the Limitation Act is 30 days. The time for getting the certified copy of the judgment--if applied for--will be deducted, said criminal law expert

Anisul Huq.

But if no certified copy is applied for, then any appeal will be time-barred on the expiry of 30 days and the condemned prisoner may be executed if he does not apply for mercy to the president, he said.

After expiry of 30 days, the jail authority will ask the convicts if they want to seek mercy from the president. "If they send mercy petition through the jail authority, the matter will be resolved basing on the deci-sion of the president, "hesaid. The condemned prisoners may be

executed if they do not apply for the presidential mercy or remain silent bout it, he said. 'In this case, the 30-day period

expires on September 30. So, the judgment can be executed on any date from October 1 provided the condemned prisoners do not prefer appealing before the Appellate Division or seek mercy from the president, "said Anisul Huq.

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed on The Appellate 1 and 1

fuesday said he is hopeful that it will be possible to execute the death sentence awarded on the seven militants during the tenure of the esent government. BACKGROUND

On their way to the court, Jagannath Pandey and Sohel Ahmed were waitng in a microbus in front of Assistant udge Abdul Awal's house in Quarter Palli area in Jhalakathi town on November 14 last year when suicide bomber Mamun blasted a bomb on

Sohel died on the spot while Jagannath died later at the hospital. Suicide bomber Mamun was arrested from the spot with grave injuries. Two separate cases were filed with

the Jhalakathi Police Station--one for murder and another for bomb explo-

On February 20, Barisal Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal awarded 40 rigorous imprisonment to Abdur Rahman, Bangla Bhai, Molla Omar (killed in Rab action in Comilla) and Khaled Saifullah in the bomb xplosion case filed under the The charge sheet of the murder

case was submitted on March 21 and the court framed charge on April 20 The judgment was delivered on May nesses and hearing of arguments of Apart from the seven condemned.

the investigators found proof of six others' involvement in the conspir-acy to kill the two judges. They, how-ever, did not press charge against Molla Omaras he died by then in Rab

Although the charge was primarily proved against Mehedi, Moaz, Talha and Mahmud, they were not accused in the charge sheet as their full address could not be found. The investigators said they would submit a supplementary charge sheet later if they can collect the addresses. Chargesheeted accused Sultan

Khan was acquitted by the court as the charge could not be proved Immediately after the verdict, the

government took steps for quick disposal of the militants' death reference case as over 500 cases still await paper-book preparation (history of the case) and death reference hearing

The HC later granted permission for preparing the paper-book of the case on priority basis. On completion of the paper-book, hearing of the death reference began on August 1 and was completed on August 23 after 10 working days. The HC examined statements of 44 witnesses MOUDUD'S REACTION

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed yester day said the militants convicted of

Wednesday night.
Normalcy came to the upazila town, nearly 40km east of Dinajpur, after the government signed the memorandum with National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources and Electricity-

offices, markets, banks and other institutions and road and railway communications were opened vesterday morning

In spite of being happy with their victory, the leaders and locals still doubt if the government would be sincere enough to fulfil their six-point demand it agreed to meet on Wednesdaynight.

"I still don't believe the government agreed to meet the six-point demand we had bargained for," the Phulbari committee unit convenor, along with many others said yesterday expressing their surprise.

Thousands of people yesterday brought out colourful processions on the streets of the town dancing and singing and beating drums. They squirted each other with coloured

A few of the leaders, who gained fame and popularity among the 22,000 voters in the municipality, are thinking about contesting the next municipality and local administra-

took place at the government college

Locals and leaders of the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources and Electricity-Portspoke in the rally.

Bangladesh Communist Party

President Monjurul Islam Khan, Central Coordinator of Gonofron Tipu Biswas also attended the rally and expressed their gratitude to the people of Phulbari and its adjacent area for forcing the government to

bow to people's demands. The leaders urged the people to be alert so that no more companies like Asia Energy can take their lands.

Locals announced the names of missingpeople in loudspeakers in the municipality areas vesterday. The committee members however are yet

among the passersby and people in the market building, the witnesses

A large portion of the concrete slab of the footpath over the sewer was destroyed due to the explo-

Fire service sources said that the explosion occurred due to the leakage of gas from the supply line of Bakhrabad Gas System Limited

fire caused by the explosion and cleared out smokes and gas trapped inside the sewer making several holes on the footpath.

Asked what will happen to other cases that also accuse these seven militants after execution of the death

ance government if they do not appeal to the Appellate Division.

"Bangladesh has proved that the militants can be detected, arrested and be put into trial," Moudud told BBC Bangla Service last night in his reaction to the High Court verdict that confirmed the lower court's death sentence to the seven militants. death sentence to the seven militants. The verdict proves that the gov-

ernment has strong political commit-ment on the issue, Moudud said. Meanwhile, the main opposition Awami League (AL) has expressed doubt over the government's inten-

tion regarding the militants. AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil said, "We do not have any confidence in the government until the final execution of the verdict."

Jalil cited the example of Jhinto who was awarded death penalty in a murder case 22 years ago and was later granted the president's mercy in 2005 just after his return from

### US, EU get

Security Council. But that appeared unlikely, given Ahmadinejad's speech and new findings by the International Atomic Energy Agency that Iran was enriching small quantities of uranium as late as Tuesday.

### BNP' founding

capital where Prime Minister and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is expected to be present.

The celebration will conclude on September 3 with a colourful procession in the city at 3:00pm. Similar programmes will be organised and party offices illumi-

nated in the evenings at upazilas, districts and in the metropolitan

#### Blood bank

FROM PAGE 20 for users, said the experts accompanying the mobile court.

"They did not conduct any cross-match of the blood but put fake test results on the bags. They did not even preserve it properly," said Sarder M Keramat Ali, the magis-trateleading the mobile court.

"Generally, the blood has to be preserved between two to eight degrees Celsius, but they were keeping the blood in a regular refrig-erator," said Keramat. "The reagent they were using to identify the blood group was expired as well".

Before the members of the mobile court reached the New Medical Lab on Hosni Dalan Road, Babu, the pymer of the lab, his brother Alangh, also a word boy of Dhaka Medical College Hospital and manager Azizul Haq locked up the lab and fled the scene.

The mobile court sealed the medical lab after seizing the blood bags. It also issued warrants inst the criminals involved in

the illegal business.

The mobile court also found some clues of illegal abortion

activities in the lab. New Medical Lab has been operating without any license or

#### Slain judge's

Pallabi, who seemed too emotional to give any detailed interview with the journalists, said she is satisfied with the judgment.

Expressing the hope that the death sentences would be executed within the tenure of present government without any procrastination in the name of law, she said. My only son, family members, our well-wishers and I would be happy only when the death sentences are

Earlier, family members of Pallabi expressed anxiety about the possible retaliation attempt by JMB terrorists after the execution of the verdict and demanded trial, pun-ishment and uprooting of all the IMB terrorists and their godfathers.

Three-year-old Arghya, the only son of Jagannath Pandey and Pallabi Pandey, does not want to be a judge, family members said.

nine other issues within one month. Local administration took tight The nine issues include giving security measures on the court appointment letters and identity compounds in Barisal and cards to the workers, allowing them Jhalakathi and around the houses of the killed judges Jagannath Pandey and Shahid Sohel Ahmed in one day weekly holiday and other government holidays according to the existing labour laws. Barisal and Bhola. As per the agreement, the female workers would get maternity leave with regular salary and an worker

#### PM asks army

the future.

She said the government is continuing the modernisation process of the armed forces. As part of the process, a substantial quantity of weapons and equipment have been procured while modern small arms and ammunition will also be imported soon to further enrich the

ous roles and activities of members of the armed forces apart from their professional duties.

She said the armed forces played important role in curbing terrorism through "Operation Clean Heart" and also in improving law and order by Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) that consists of police and members of the armed forces.

She said members of the armed forces have been acclaimed every-where in the world for successfully performing their duties in UN peacekeeping missions, Khaleda said, hoping that this reputation will increase in the future.

adding: "We will maintain this trend of sending troops to the UN peace-keeping missions in the future." Ministers, distinguished person-alities and high civil and military

League, Ainjibi Samannay Parishad and other organisation brought out processions and held rallies at places in the town yesterday to protest Alam's death

Cox's Bazar.

## Jatiya Oikya Front

FROM PAGE 1 Kamal and Badruddoza Chowdhury answered journalists'

JOF pledged to strengthen the ongoing movement for reforms and said they might have agreements with other political parties and alliance, which are moving against the four-party alliance to ensure people's victory by organising minimum agitation programmes.

"We shall not go for the elections without reforms. We cannot take part in an election that is being engineered by the four-party alliance and will be shameful for the nation," said Badruddoza Chowdhury.

He said they would never leave the parliament regardless of their being in the government or in the opposition. The Speaker of the parfament must be non-partisan and there should be two deputy speakers, one from the ruling party and the other from the opposition, he added. On Ershad's inclusion in the four-

party alliance Chowdhury said, "He [Ershad] has several options. His joining the four-party alliance is still not certain. Even if he joined, he would participate in the elections with his election symbol Langol [plough]. He may also leave the alliance after the elections."

When asked if there were any possibilities of Ershad joining JOF he

said, "That option is also there."

JOF leader Dr Kamal Hossain
urged the alliance government 'not
to ruin the nation any further' at the ag end of their tenure and advised them to hold a 'function of seeking apology in the next 50 days.

Kamal avoided answering when asked from which alliance he would compete in the election, 14-party alliance or the JOF, as he is in both

. Asked if the new alliance would request Justice KM Hasan, the possible chief adviser to the next caretaker government under the current system, not to take the post, Kamal said, "We have to think over struc-tural issues for achieving any target."

#### Stay order

FROM PAGE 20 Star the posting order of the 52 DADs, who were inspectors of now defunct Bureau of Anti Corruption (Bac), is valid now and there is no bar for them to work for the ACC.

The HC had staved the order following a writ petition filed by former Bac inspector Jahangir Hossain challenging legality of the posting order. The ACC after screening Bac

staff retained 52 inspectors and appointed and posted them as DAD in different position in July. Jahangir was excluded after the

declined to accept a compromise proposal placed by the wage board's independent member who

recommended Tk 1,800 as the

minimum basic wage for the work-

ers and gross salary of about Tk

2,650 a month. Minimum wage for

Workers' leaders, however, have

hinted that they are ready to accept

Annisul Huq, representative of Bangladesh Garment

Manufacturers and Exporters

Association (BGMEA) in the wage board, said: "It is true that there is

no substantial progress on the table. But it would be possible to

settle the issue by mid-

owners and workers' leaders at a tripartite meeting on 12 June 2006

inked a 10-point memorandum of

understanding (MoU) after a series

of discussions on May 24, June 1

and June 4 among the stakeholders

in the garment sector and decided

to implement those in phases to

address the labour unrest, ensure

labour rights and peaceful atmo-

Endorsing the wage board formed on May 31, the MoU set a

one-month deadline for addressing

would be entitled to get overtime if

he works more than eight hours a

all the cases filed against the workers

by the owners and not terminating

Chakaria Police Station told The

Daily Star that the cause of death was heart attack. "As his condition

deteriorated, we rushed him to

Chakaria Sadar Hospital, where he

But Alam's family claimed that

he was subjected to 'inhuman

torture' in police custody and died

as a result a couple of hours into his

autopsy was performed and the

body was buried under police

supervision adding that without an autopsy report, they are now

unable to file a case against the

body was buried on orders of the

superintendent of police (SP) of

The OC, however, told that the

The main opposition AL, Mohila

They also complained that no

AL leader dies

FROM PAGE 20

died," he added.

The MoU included withdrawal of

sphere in the factories.

The government, garment

fixed around 12 years ago.

ow 1k 950 that was

He said they went to different parts of the country, discussed national issues with people and

forming the alliance. The four-party alliance has looted national resources, politicised the administration and the judiciary, which is why people want a mean ingful change in running the state. "We are united today to bring the changes," headded.

listened to their suggestions before

Tarikat Federation Chairman Syed Najibul Bashar Maijbhandari said the new alliance will be victorious in at least 100 of the 211 constituencies the ruling party now has.

In the joint declaration, Major (Rtd) Abdul Mannan mentioned seven principles of the alliance. Those are electing honest and competent members, establishing effective and accountable parliament and administration, separating the judiciary from the executive, ensuring free flow of information, uprooting militancy, terrorism and taking effective steps to alleviate poverty, practical steps to ensure the rights of children and women and establishinganon-communal society.

BDB Organising Secretary Mahi B Chowdhury, Joint Secretary General Firoz Hassan and other leaders of Jatiya Oikya Manch and Tarikat Federation were present.

#### Revised voter

reporters visited the BNP office at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. But they found the building to be under construc-

tion and there were no arrangements for the updated voter list to be posted for public inspection. From there, the reporters went to the residence of Afroza Parveen,

president of BNP ward No 40 unit, but she was not present at that time. Members of her family told them that she had gone outside, locking the voter list in a safe.

Abul Quasem, divisional election commissioner in charge, told reporters that the updated voter list should have been posted at local election offices and local government bodies' offices for public viewing.

"There's nothing to be worried if she keeps photocopy of the voter

The ward No 40 covers the area of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Rajabazar and Indira Road. Many people visiting the ward

commissioner's office could not check whether their names are on the list as the major portion of it was Officials at the office last night

said that they are trying to retrieve the updated voter list from the residence of Afrozaganas and safet vilsa

# New agitation

except fixing a minimum wage were supposed to be solved within a month but the garment owners did not do it," said Amirul Haque Amin general secretary of Jatiya Garment

"We are aggrieved and do not have any option but to start fresh agitation," Amin said, adding, "We will not be responsible if anything happens due to not implementing the deal in time.

The JGSF will hold a rally at Muktangon today to protest the role of the government and garment

"We are going to take a series of general secretary of Bangladesh Garment Sramik Karmachari Federation.

Expressing concern about the labour unrest, foreign buyers have said it has serious negative impact on Bangladesh's RMG sector.

Buvers are not sure about what is oing on in Bangladesh and what will happen here next week. It creates uncertainty and the buyers tend to shift to other countries," Arnd Bornemann, manager-Bangladesh operation of Karstadt Quelle said recently.

### Huge gap

The committee recommended that the government reform the land management by formulating new laws -- both civil and criminal -- and set up special court on land related crimes to ensure punishment of land

Thousands of acres of land worth Tk 60,000 to 70,000 crore are in grabbers' hands now and mainly businessmen, industrialists and local elite are on the list of grabbers, Mahbubur Rahman told a briefing after the meeting.

nor tell the total area of land which has been occupied by grabbers in these districts although the committee in the August 9 meeting had decided to disclose the names of the grabbers, most of whom are influential, at its next meeting on August 31. The grabbers have taken control

of the land by force or by fraudulent means, even some grabbers made fake papers with the help of some corrupt officials, ministry officials told the meeting. According to the district administration, 3,273 grabbers including housing companies are occupying

13,745 grabbers have taken control of 4.207 acres of land in Narayanganj district while 8,533 acres of land are under the occupation of 13,934 grabbers in Gazipur district.

### 8 JMB men

FROM PAGE 1

to the UNB.
Of the six convicts, Rashidul Islam and Shafiqul Islam have been absconding since the bombings in

the district town.

According to the prosecution, the JMB militants exploded six bombs at five points in the town as part of serial bombings across the country on August 17 last year.

After the incident, police arrested 38 people, including the six JMB militants, at different places of the district. The arrested JMB activists con-

fessed to the police that they were involved in the bombings. Police later pressed charges against the IMB men. After examining records, judge M Golam Rabbani handed down the

judgment in a crowded court amid

tight security. Our Staff Correspondent from Rajshahi reported that the Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal yesterday awarded life imprisonment to JMB Chapainawabganj district leader Shahidullah Faruk and bomb expert Abul Kashem Tufan in an arms case filed with Tanore Police station last year.

Handing down the verdict, the tribunal judge AFM Aminul Islam fined the convicts Tk 5000 each, in default, they are to suffer five years more in jail.

Faruk and Tufan were arrested along with four firearms, bombmaking materials and some book of Laskar-e Taiyeba at Pakchandpur in l'anore upazila on September 16, Faruk's father Maolana

Meserullah Nasir Uddin is a teacher

of Nachol Madrasa and his elder

brother Obaidullah is a Jamaat

### Ex-bureaucrat

leader of Tanore upazila

would take place after the week-

Hasan Mansur Mahmud, hailing from Bogra, had served as a secretary to the post and telecommunications and defence ministries on contractual basis.

Earlier, the government appointed Justice MA Aziz as the chief election commissioner (CEC) on May 23 last year and two other election commissioners--Justice Mahfuzur Rahman and SM Zakaria-- on January 16 this year, ignoring the opposition's demand for consensus appointments. The 14-Party opposition combine led by Awami League (AL),

which had rejected the previous

bers of the EC and new appointments on the basis of consensus. Saber Hossain Chowdhury, AL organising secretary and political secretary to AL President Sheikh Hasina, in his reaction told The Daily Star last night that yet another politically motivated appointment came at a time when reconstitution

of the EC has grown to be a national demand. He observed that the appointment was given as part of the ruling alliance's plot to engineer the upcoming election, and it further exposes the hostile and confrontational attitude of the government.

#### Asia Energy

In a statement, the company said it has not received any communication from the government that it is cancelling all existing agreements

It is seeking to clarify the reported remarks of Food and Disaster Deputy Minister Asadul Habib Dulu that the government has decided to cancel its open pit coal mine project.

Asia Energy is also seeking to determine the government's position towards the project.

The company's shares will remain suspended from trading pending a further announcement,

### Saudi prince

FROM PAGE 20 The technical offers of the Saudi prince include introduction of online banking, global banking and investment banking. The new administration also aims at opening branches of Rupali Bank across

(Tk 16 crore) when the exchange rate for US dollar was Tk 25 "So, we are getting an attractive price for Rupali Bank," the Privatisation Commission official

The government will bear the liabilities of the existing pensioners

and the accrued rights of the current

employees with cash payments

made from the government budget. "For this, the government will have to spend about Tk 500 crore,' the source said. Besides, there are bad loans of around Tk 1,000 crore from the bank by different state-

will go private and the government will have to bear 27 per cent of it as The Saudi prince offered such a huge amount of money for buying Rupali Bank with a view to bringing

Bangladeshis in Saudi Arabia The new administration has also plans for investment in other businesses in Bangladesh like

## Govt's handling

FROM PAGE 1 first imply that foreign investors cannot rely on Bangladesh's sover-eign guarantee. This will greatly affect

the country's image internationally. Secondly, this will lead to an international arbitration and that might cost Bangladesh double the money Asia Energy has invested in the country so far. If Bangladesh loses such a case, the penalty could exceed Tk 200

On the other hand, with the elec-

tion nearing, the government will not be able to send back Asia Energy to Phulbari even with the highest security. In the wake of last week's killings, public sentiment is intensely against the company that had proposed relocation of at least 50,000 people from the mine site. Leaders of the ruling BNP themselves are now divided over this mat-ter. Party leaders having leftist politi-

cal background are now opposing the Asia Energy deal but other leaders do not subscribe to the idea of cancellation of a deal that has sovereign guarantee. The latter group however has remained almost silent. Sources said energy ministry adviser Mahmudur Rahman was frantically trying from yesterday morn-

ing to convince the country's business

leaders to issue a statement in favour of

the Asia Energy deal. But none of them agreed to do so till evening. Side by side, the high commissioners of UK and Australia yesterday visited the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) to express their concern over the fate of the deal.

Cancellation of the contract was announced by Rajshahi Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu Wednesdayat Phulbari to pacify people agitating against the open-pit coal-mine pro-ject. The BDR shot dead six demonstrators on August 26, fuelling the anti- Asia Energy agitation to an uncontrollable level.
WHO IS AT FAULT?

government's total indifference to public outcry against Asia Energy's proposal since last year. The company on the other hand failed to fathom public sentiment against its open-pit mining proposal. "The government left to Asia Energy the issue of negotiating with the public for resettlement. This is so

The Phulbari issue stemmed from the

taken it up from the beginning. This is a failure of governance," noted an "Moreover, when people started voicing that they do not want to be relocated and that this project will jeopardise their livelihood, the government could have simply asked Asia Energy to revise their proposal by dropping the open-pit mining aspect. If the company would have refused to

There is a huge social aspect of such a coal mining project. It is not just economics. Why did the government wait so long allowing the National

do it, the government could consider

Port to stage a massive demonstra-tion? And then why did it kill people? Seeking anonymity he said, "It is not the fault of Asia Energy that it has such a deal. Our government signed it, and it must take the onus of all the disasters that happened at Phulbari."

A geological expert expressed similar views, saying it had always been up to the government to change modify or not to approve Asia Energy's proposal. "The company has so far done exercises relating only to exploration, feasibility and environment. If the government has okayed these even if these were not up to the standard, it is again the fault of the government," hesaid.

"But following the Phulbari killings, Asia Energy executives made come and cious, remarks about the

some audacious remarks about the protestors. This has irritated every-

The expert pointed out that Asia Energy's field level staffs did a bad job with public relations at Phulbari. Those who were assigned to negotiate with locals about relocation had practically talked against the com-pany to the locals or gave cash to the disgruntled ones, and gave positive reports to the company. This created

the image of a corrupt company among Phulbari people. "The truth is Asia Energy is a novice company with zero project experience. People started questioning why did the government sign a deal with such a company. The disastrous instances of Niko Resources at l'engratila or Occidental at Magurchhara have also fuelled public suspicion about the company," he

**DEAL CANCELLATION ISSUE** 

Cancellation of the contract that cancellation of the contract that allowed Asia Energy to explore and conduct survey and prepare project feasibility study must follow some steps permissible in the deal, says former chief of the Bureau of Mineral Development (BMD) M Muminullah, who was involved in the original deal. The government signed this contract with Australian coal company BHP in August 1994 on the basis of an

insolicited negotiation, which was transferred to Asia Energy in 1998 as per the country's Mines and Minerals des, 1968. The contract can be cancelled if Asia Energy violates different aspects of mining. But before the cancellation, the company has to be warned. If the warning is ignored, the company will be penalised. And further viola-tion can lead to termination of the contract, Muminullah said.

"In 1998, when the government okayed the transfer of BHP contract to Asia Energy in the shape of Assignment Agreement of Exploration Licences under the Mines and Minerals Rules, 1968, the government had formed a 12-memberanterministerial national advisory com-mittee to look into the deal. This

not giving it mining licence, "he added A top business leader pointed out that open-pil mining is typically implemented in countries with low population density. He went on, "There is a huge social aspect of such a sall mining project. It is not just occasional drilling of holes to collect coal samples. It started its activities in full swing in 2002 after having an understanding with the government on open-pit mining.

compliance in the garment sector".

The garment factory owners fear

further unrest following the

announcement of minimum wages

and urged the minister to take mea-

sures to tackle any kind of untoward

incident in the garment sector. SM Fazlul Haque, BGMEA president, said "We will implement the

directions of the wage board when it

about further unrest after the

unrest in the sector if the wage is not

satisfactory to all the workers," ech-

oed Annisul Hag, director of BGMEA.

who is also a member of the wage

vans to the home minister for provid-

tory owners that the government

would take adequate measures and

different intelligence agencies are

ing security to garment factories.

BGMEA handed over two police

Babar assured the garment fac-

announcement".

announced, but we are worried

There is a possibility of another

## Babar sees

Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Electricity and

meet the demands of the workers

as per the tripartite deal. "During my visit to the affected factories, I found some definite reasons for the unrest behind the workers' logical demand. So, you (garment owners) have to meet their demands as much as possible immediately," Babar said at a seminar organised by Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers &

Exporters Association (BGMEA). The tripartite contract recognis ing due rights of the garment workers was signed on June 12, 2006 among the government, the owners and the workers of garment factories in an effort to pacify the labour unrest that had hit the industry hard.

The home minister, addressing the seminar, urged the factory owners to develop relationship with the workers to prevent any further unpleasant incident. "I know most of the garment factory owners have not maintained much communications with the workers for a long time. As a result, the mid-level management have taken advantage of the absence of owners and engaged themselves in various unethical activities against the workers." Babar said most of the garment

its activities to ensure the minimum

enforcement agencies of any further factories do not comply with the fire safety standards, which is very unfortunate. "BGMEA should strengthen

working on this issue. "We have added industrial police in the organogram of the police, which will come into being shortly" However, he advised garment leaders to develop BGMEA's own intelligence wing to inform the law

Anwarul Iqbal, inspector general ofpolice and MAAziz Sarkar, director general of Rapid Action Battalion also spokeat the meeting.

### Telecom Secy hid

FROM PAGE 1 again for Huawei, approved. Whereas, on July 7 the CPTU asked the telecoms secretary to suspend processing Huawei's bid until the

decides its fate.

Subsequently, on July 24 the review panel informed the telecoms secretary that Huawei's bid was evaluated without imposing 50 penalty points for "material deviation". The panel has also found all bidders being disqualified in this tender and, therefore, it recommended re-tendering.

Although the telecoms secretary

planning ministry's review panel

has brushed aside this directive, the BTTB has, however, decided to be compliant. On August 15, the BTTB sought the telecoms secretary's administrative approval to re-tender the VoIP platform supply project, as suggested by the plan-ning ministry's review panel. Instead of responding to BTTB's

was extremely busy with various issues since I am retiring soon," he

Shamsuddin's service. The matter is now waiting for the prime minister's

### Celebrations all

All the upazila administrative

"We took oath not to leave the streets until Asia Energy left the land, but could not imagine this would come so early... which makes us a bit dubious," said Manik Sarker, a local leader and secretary of Banik Samity

Around 5,000 people attended the victory procession and the rally that

ground at noon yesterday. The rally observed a minute's silence for the deceased in Bangladesh Rifles firing

## to prepare a list of the missing.

running through the area. Fire fighters extinguished the

FROM PAGE 1 process of their modernisation in

armed forces' arsenal. The prime minister lauded vari-

The number of Bangladeshi peacekeepers now stands at 16,000, the highest in the world, she said,

any workers for involvement in the movement. The owners also agreed not to create any hindrance to formation of trade union in any factory.
"As per the MoU all the issues

Sramik Federation (JGSF).

agitation programmes from September 1 to protest the move of the garment owners and the role of the government in implementing the agreement," said Kamrul Ahsan,

FROM PAGE 20 Sangsad Bhaban.

He could neither provide the list

,993 acres of land in Dhaka district

ridiculous. Why would anyone in Phulbari trust a foreign private company? The government should have

appointments, has long been calling for resignation of all the mem-

with the company.

the subcontinent.
In the early 1980s, Pubali Bank was sold out for \$6.4 million only

However, the government will have to spend a good chunk of the amount for realising the bank's liabilities in phases, he added.

owned enterprises The owners will have to inject Tk 400 crore for capital when the bank

in remittance from around five lakh through online banking, Privatisa tion Commission sources said.

tourism, hotel and the energy sector, and their banking business will help them in this regard, the

committee has approved it too.
"Both the deals are perfect recipe for anti-corruption prosecution,

but we are safe since the telecoms ministry has unilaterally handled them," said a BTTB high official requesting anonymity. He alleges the cabinet purchase committee could have rejected these deals if the telecoms secretary would have presented the planning ministry's Telecoms Secretary AKM Shamsuddin, however, pleads not guilty and claims to have 'verbally'

informed the cabinet purchase committee about the CPTU's reservations on these two deals with Huawei. "I could not present the CPTU's remarks in writing as they came after processing the purchase proposals," he said. The telecoms secretary, however, could not clarify why he did not send supplementary notes stating the CPTU's remarks afterwards. "I

plea, the telecoms secretary pro-cessed the VoIP platform purchase Sources said the telecoms minister has recently strongly recom-mended for an extension of proposal hiding Huawei's shortcomings and the cabinet purchase

### One killed