# NEWS

mendation, the telecoms ministry

sat on it. and in August approved

Huawei's \$ 3.5 million bid to set up

the platform in Dhaka

Chittagong, Sylhet and Bogra through which internet phone

But following reports on this in

The Daily Star, the PMO

cancelled the Huawei bid and

directed the BTTB to re-tender the

scheme. BTTB sources said

preparations for re-tender is now

Mufti Hannan

The accused along with their

accomplices hurled petrol bombs on

the family members of Bazlur

Rahman that left his wife Bilkis

Begum, daughter-in-law Achhia

Begum and a relative Masum

wounded. So, they need to be

remanded for quizzing to find out the

After the hearing, Metropolitan

Earlier on September 10, Hannan

Magistrate ABM Abdul Fattah granted

the proposed remand sought by the IO

Batamul blast case and placed on a

13-day remand for interrogation. On

January 20, 2001, and placed on a 14-

guoting the negotiators who are also

trying to coax Justice Hasan into

"We will not give the opposition

There is no way but to continue

the dialogue until reaching a con-

sensus. The ruling BNP secretary

general and AL general secretary

claimed on Tuesday that they have

The opposition alliance is waiting

for the outcome of the dialogue,

refraining from street agitations at

become "very closer" on many

issues

day remand in two phases.

Hasan

FROM PAGE 1

clues about the killing, the IO said.

calls will be channelised.

at a final stage.

FROM PAGE 16

of the case

ker. said.

Solheim, Norway's top peace bro-

Akashi was scheduled to meet

officials from both sides "with a view

to enhancing this constructive effort

and will also exchange views on the

peace process and its future," the

Sri Lanka's tiny stock market, which had gained on the back of

possible peace talks, went into

reverse Wednesday, falling just over

reconsider its decision to go to Switzerland for talks if the military

launched fresh attacks. The govern-

ment had said it agreed to talks on

the basis that it could defend itself

workers from France and

Luxembourg were at the scene by

the early afternoon, trying to extract

helicopter shuttled victims to hospi-

of steel and tangled metal, with

wagons up-ended and pointing into

the sky." said Bertrand Mertz, vice-

president of the Lorraine regional

Villepin, who was en route to the

Caribbean island of Guadeloupe

ordered his plane to return to France

in order to visit the scene. President

Jacques Chirac issued a statement

to express his condolences to the

The two trains were a double

French city of Nancy, and a freight

"As a result of the work only one

track was open instead of two, and

together head-to-head," an SNCF

tive director, said the French freight

train was the first onto the section of

track, and that its driver had not

Earlier Mertz told France 3

France's last serious rail acci-

Bell said seismic waves detected

after the claimed test were still being

television that railway signallers in

dent was in 2002 when 12 died in a

Luxembourg were to blame.

fire on a night train near Nancy.

Guillaume Pepy, SNCF execu-

Prime Minister Dominique de

"It's apocalyptic. There's a mess

The LTTE had warned it would

try and boost peace efforts.

apanese embassy said.

half-a-percentage-point.

from rebel attacks.

12 killed

FROM PAGE 16

council.

bereaved.

uxembourg.

spokesman said.

broken a red light.

### Militia mortar attack destroys US ammo dump in Baghdad

#### AFP, Baghdad

Iraqi militia fired a mortar round into a US military base in Baghdad, triggering a thunderous series of explosions that destroyed an ammunition dump and rocked the entire

The munitions store in Forward Operating Base Falcon was still burning yesterday, more than 13 hours after the strike set off a blaze that lit up the night sky and spread panic in the already shell-shocked Iragi capital.

"Intelligence indicates that civilians aligned with a militia organisation were responsible for last night's mortar attack." said US army Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Withington, spokesman for Multinational Division Baghdad.

Surprisingly, there were no reports of casualties among the more than 2,000 US military and civilian personnel at the camp, nor among the citizens of Baghdad, whose night was disturbed by several hours of terrifying detonations. "At the beginning we heard an

ordinary explosion. We thought the Americans had fired at something, but I went out of the house and saw fire from inside the base," said Abu Sajad, who lives near the base with 24 relatives.

"The explosions got stronger and stronger. Two window panes were broken in my house. Rockets were flying here and there, some of them far away. The fire went down then renewed again. Then there was a big explosion

"We could not sleep all night. We went into two rooms in the middle of the house for safety. My brother put cotton wool in four of the children's ears. We hugged them to confort them," he said.

Withington said engineers and firefighters were working to quell the flames and make the remaining munitions safe.

"The fire ignited tank, artillerv and small-arms ammunition at a forward operating base in the central Rasheed district of Baghdad," he said, explaining that the 82mm mortar round was fired from Abu T-Shir, a Shiite district.

"Soldiers and base employees

were moved immediately to the safety of hardened buildings and structures on the base." a coalition statement said.

begin deliberate clearance of poten-

tial unexploded ordnance." US casualties, the explosions marked a rare success for mortar teams working for militia and insurgent groups, which rarely cause much damage to well-protected US

Given the nature of the attack and the direction from which the shell was fired, suspicion will fall on Shiite militia groups such as the Mahdi Army, a loosely organised armed group loyal to radical cleric Mogtada al-Sadr

10:40 pm (1940 GMT) on Tuesday and shortly afterwards a steady drumbeat of explosions could be heard as far as five kilometres (2.4 miles) away in the city centre.

Government spokesmen appeared on state television to urge calm and quash rumours that the city was under attack.

five areas in the south of the city, but the interior ministry said there did not seem to have been any casualties outside the base. pictures of a blazing inferno lighting

o the night sky from the south side the metropolis US troops in Baghdad are taking part in Operation Together Forward,

along with more than 40,000 Iraqi personnel, to quell an eight-month old outbreak of sectarian bloodletting between rival Sunni and Shiite factions.

Despite the security plan, United Nations and Iraqi officials estimate that more than 100 people are killed each day, more than at any time since the invasion, and Baghdad's streets are littered with corpses dailv.

tion. The police even did not take any

effective measures to protect the

garment factories from the agitating

tive director of Cannon Garments

Ltd, held police responsible for the

violence and said, "We suffered a

Nuruddin Ahmed Sheikh, execu-

# Over 7,000 sued

around 3.000 garment workers. Of them, 116 were named while the rest were unidentified. Out of the 116 named accused, 13 were arrested

during Tuesday's clashes. In Pallabi, the police filed one and owners of three RMG factories filed another case with Pallabi Police Station yesterday accusing around 3,000 unidentified garment workers for vandalising factories and vehicles

"Firefighters from the base and hazardous material experts will continue to work toward extinguishing the fire. Engineers and explosive ordnance detachment teams will

onstrated there for about five hours. local and inter-city trains from Rajshahi and locked the booking While there were no reports of office, ticket counters and the station master's office. sion and held a rally on the BR west

facilities.

The blaze broke out at around

shop at Saidpur. employees of the workshop from entering it. no trains could ply to and from the

Iraqi officials said shells "cooking off" in the fire had crashed down in

State television showed live

FROM PAGE 1 cost in the first project profile (PP) was Tk.650 crore. Namnam signed the contract with Petrobangla in March 2004

under a North Korean supplier's credit project. Repeated delays by Namnam cost the government an additional Tk 600 crore, according to our sources.

This year, the project was supposed to go on test run in June, but failed due to technical glitches. Then the deadline for the test run was extended to October, added the sources.

Targeted extraction of granite from the mine is around 1.65 million tonnes per year and the duration of the project is set for 46 years.

### Outlaws

FROM PAGE 16 Narail in one day. Later, one Rony Biswas, who was a leader of Janaiuddha then and now the chief of PBCP-Communist War. called ournalists over telephone and claimed responsibility for the killings terming them 'revenge killings'. Police in Khulna range were put

on high alert and security in the region was beefed up following the four murders.

"Police are searching for the source of the phone calls." a police high official of Khulna told The Daily Star yesterday.

loss of about Tk 2 crore as machinery There are at least 12 outlawed and products were ruined in the parties in the region who have around 1.000 illegal firearms in their possession, sources said. The parties are: PBCP-ML, PBCP-Janajuddha, PBCP-Red Flag, PBCP-Communist War, Biplabi Communist Party, New Biplabi Communist Party, Banglar Communist Party, Gono Mukti Fouj Gono Bahini, Socialist Party, Biplabi Anuragi and Chhinnamul Communist Party. At least 352 outlaws including several top leaders of the parties were killed in the region in so-called 'encounter and crossfire' incidents with law enforcers since June 2004. Of them, at least 215 were from

### BTRC in a hurry

"Actually we did not have much to do when all the workers and employ-

insider

Railways

ees engaged in operating trains

were either forced to stop work or

did so willingly," Divisional Railway

Manager Ibrahim Khalil Ullah told

They forced out all the on-duty

managers from cabin controls (from

where trains get clearance) and the

operators from signal boxes to keep

Our Raishahi correspondent

reports that the striking staff started

athering at Raishahi railway sta-

tion early in the morning and dem-

They prevented movement of all

Later, they brought out a proces-

zonal office premises. They drove

out all officials and employees from

Our Nilphamari correspondent

reports: About four thousand agitat-

ing workers and employees of

Saidpur railway division besieged

three inter-city trains at Saidpur

station and stopped all activities at

the country's largest railway work-

They prevented all officials and

Our Sylhet correspondent says

city during the 12-hour strike. All

offices at the railway station also

Madhyapara

remained closed.

hose under lock and key, he said.

FROM PAGE 1

The Daily Star.

their offices.

FROM PAGE 1 "Moreover, without a common from a bidder, the planning ministry in March categorically recom-mended blacklisting Huawei for platform, nobody will know how much the VoIP operators are corrupt practices to win the conearning. It is ridiculous to expect tract. Such blacklisting should be that they will give genuine revedone as per "Regulation 15" of the nue reports to the government and pay taxes," said an industry Public Procurement Regulations (PPR), the ministry said. Instead of taking decision as per the planning ministry recom-

"If the BTRC finds it okay to award VoIP licenses now without a common platform, why did it not award the licences three years ago as it had committed earlier? What made it so different for the BTRC to award the licenses now?" asked an official.

The BTTB in a letter to the telecoms ministry said it believes that the BTRC move is against the earlier decision of the government. The very purpose of legalising VoIP will now be at stake, the BTTB says.

It says that once the operators are allowed to execute internet telephony without a common platform, it will be almost impossible to bring them to such a platform afterwards.

In January 2004, the BTRC announced legalising VoIP and awarding of licenses within two months. Illegal VoIP operation is eating up several hundred crores of taka and is playing a leading laundering since role in money 2000. But the BTRC mysteriously remained silent Top illegal VoIP operators

include young political top notches while an unscrupulous section of BTTB officials and a couple of mobile phone companies assist in this operation.

Now, as the tenure of the alliance government is due to expire this month, the BTRC invited applications for VoIP licenses on September 21 with the last date being October 8 Sources said a good number of applications have been filed with the BTRC, which plans to award the licenses as soon as possible. But a common platform through which international calls will be channelised is yet to be set up. Meanwhile, vested interest

groups using their political influence slowed down the BTTB's move to set up a common plat-form. The BTTB has floated tender twice and is now going for a third tender for this job.

As per the BTTB recommenda-tion, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) approved setting up of a common platform in May last year to ensure a controlled internet telephony. In two rounds of tender floating, the BTTB received good offers but each time vested interest groups forced it to pick up flawed bids

year and the second earlier this year. In the second tender, the BTTB picked up a bid of Chinese company Huawei, represented by the youngest son of a very powerful minister Following a formal complaint

### All-party

FROM PAGE 16

of human rights, August 21 grenade attacks and May 21 grenade attack on the British High Commissioner and extra-iudicial killings.

The meeting held deliberation on the moment to press home their the report compiled by Robert demands for reforms in the care-Templer. Asia programme director taker government system, Electior of Daily Telegraph International Commission and electoral laws. Crisis Group. Former British The opposition leader already Minister Jeremy Corbin, British called upon people to throng the Parliament Human Rights capital with whatever they have on Committee Chairman Lord Eric the day Justice Hasan assumes Ibrary, APPG Member Selly Cable office as the chief adviser to make MP, Heriquen MP and former the Hasan-led caretaker govern-Bangladesh law minister Abdul Matin Khasru were, among others, took part in the deliberations. Representatives of Bangladesh High Commission in London were

### SSB promotes

#### FROM PAGE 1

have also been recommended for upper posts, sources said. The recommendations would be sent to the PMO for approval and a circular will be published within a couple of days, they added.

Sources also said that there are still around 600 deputy secretaries against the posts of around 400 at present. The Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General has been repeatedly giving objections to this, saying that they face difficulties to maintain the wages, as the number of the officials is higher than the approved posts.

Meanwhile, seven foreign ministry officials, now posted in Bangladesh missions abroad, have also been recommended for elevation to director general (joint secretary) with postings at the ministry. They are Sabbir Ahmed, Zulfiquer Rahman, Tareg Ahsan, Mashfi Binte Shams, Sufia Rahman, Sheikh Sekandar Ali and Wahidur Rahman. They are now awaiting the approval of the prime minister, official sources said.

2nd Meghnaghat FROM PAGE 1

which in this case is encashment of Orion-Belhasa's bid bond of \$10

However, the alliance governwas shown arrested in the Ramna ment's favourite consortium last week sent a letter asking the PDB to set either October 11 or October 12 September 19, he was shown arrested in connection with the bomb as the date for signing the LLA. blasts at the Communist Party of There was no signing yesterday and Bangladesh (CPB) rally at Paltan on the PDB was yet to decide on the signing today.

PDB sources said a decision may be taken on the signing this morning

Industry insiders said the consortium was finding difficulties in arranging funds for the power project and that is why has been avoiding the LLA.

Bon Consortium directors Salman Obaidul Kabir and K Mojibul Hoque, however, claimed to The Daily Star that it has not dodged the signing of the LLA due to fund constraints.

It was rather deferred because of delays in signing of the Gas Sales Agreement (GSA) with Petrobangla, they said. The GSA signing, which must precede the LLA, was signed on September 24.

Orion never actually gave the bid that was selected for this power project and it actually submitted its name as one of the two partners of a Japanese bidder named Nisso Eiwi, which has the experience to qualify for building such power plants. But Nisso disappeared from the scene in 2004 and Orion brought in another German company, Steag, showing it as the lead bidder.

The government initially rejected uch gross anomaly but then with

Tigers kill 38 Lanka

FROM PAGE 16 Tamil Tiger attacks. Naval gun ships were deployed to prevent rebels

Norway's statement on the talks sending reinforcements by sea to was followed by an announcement the peninsula. by Japan, the island's main aid donor, that it will dispatch special The army said in a statement that envoy Yasushi Akashi on Sunday to

t evacuated the wounded from the battle field in the afternoon, about seven hours into the offensive. when the "intensity of the confrontations dwindled." Thorfinnur Omarsson, a spokesman for the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission, said it had information that the fighting had died down by mid-day. Both sides in the conflict said the offensive was launched just before dawn.

"The offensive, shattering peace hopes, comes few hours after an official announcement by Norway that parties had agreed to meet in Switzerland from 28 to 29 October," the pro-rebel Tamilnet.com website said

Norway has been working to save a 2002 truce and end spiralling violence, which has claimed over 2.200 lives since December. according to an official tally.

Some 60,000 people have been killed overall in the three-decadesold conflict between minority Tamils seeking an independent homeland and government forces. October's planned talks repre-

the injured from the wreckage, as a sent the latest attempt to quell the recent bloody upsurge in violence. "It is crucial that the government

and the LTTE now use this opportu-nity to cease hostilities," Eril Erik

AL protests FROM PAGE 16

life in USA, the AL leader threw a question to Tarique how he set up several companies when he had not 'shelter' after Zia's death.

Referring to Tarique's Monday comments over purchasing a house n Texas, USA, by a family member of Sheikh Hasina, who is also the opposition leader, Quader termed the comments as 'untrue, indecent

and objectionable' decker Luxembourg regional Reading out a written speech, express train travelling south to the Quader said the prime minister's family now own 2,000 acres of state train heading north into property and luxurious houses in Dubai, London and New York. Besides, they bought thousands of acres of land in different parts of the trains were supposed to wait their country. The nation wants to know the sources of that money, the AL turn to go on it. For reasons that are not clear, these two trains came

eader said. On Tarique's comments on Hasina's leadership, Quader said it is not AL, but the ruling BNP that needs a change in its leadership as grass roots level BNP leaders and activists feel ashamed to face public due to unbridled corruption of

Khaleda Zia and her son. AL leaders Mukul Bose, Abdul Mannan, Mahmudur Rahman Manna, Aktheruzzaman, Abdul Mannan Khan, Habibur Rahman Siraj, Nazma Rahman, Mrinal Kanti Das, Ajoy Kor Khokon, among others, attended the

press conference.

FROM PAGE 16

# North Korea

Along the razor-wired no-man'sland separating the divided Koreas. communist troops were more boldly trving to provoke their southern counterparts: spitting across the demarcation line, making throatslashing hand gestures, flashing their middle finger and trying to talk to the troops, said U.S. Army Maj Jose DeVarona of Favetteville, N.C., adding that the overall situation was calm On the streets of North Korea's capital, it seemed like business as usual. Video by AP Television News showed people milling about Kim II Sung square in Pyongyang and rehearsing a performance for the 80th anniversary of the "Down with Imperialism Union.

analyzed and it had not been vet determined if the test was successful Japan took steps to punish North Korea for the test, prohibiting its ships from entering Japanese ports and imposing a total ban on imports from the impoverished nation. North Korean nationals are also prohibited from entering Japan, with limited exceptions, the Cabinet Office said emergency security meeting late

in a statement released after an

clearing his position by issuing a statement that he is not bias to any political party. Although the ruling BNP has remained rigid on its stance on Justice Hasan issue, it may ultimately compromise on leaving the issue upon the president's consideration following expiry of its tenure.

The first tender was floated last alliance scopes to celebrate victory in the streets by recognising their demands on Justice Hasan issue," a senior BNP leader told The Daily Star.

actions on political parties, violation

and for assaulting police.

Mirpur, Kafrul, Savar and Ashulia police stations also received one case each where around 1,000 more garment workers were accused of similar charges.

Kafrul police so far arrested six of the nine accused.

Savar police also arrested fifteen suspects while Ashulia police arrested five on Tuesday.

Police produced the arrested before the Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court vesterday. Our JU correspondent reports,

owners of garment factories vandalised on Tuesday blamed the "unreasonable and rough behaviour" of police that triggered violent demonstrations on Tuesday and caused heavy damages to a number of factories in Savar and Ashulia.

Rejecting the involvement of garment workers in vandalising garment factories and vehicles, the owners complained that workers became violent after the police swooped on the peaceful demonstration of workers without any provoca-

### Tigers crash out

target of 164 in 36.4 overs with all ten wickets intact.

The victory ensured West Indies' progress in the main draw along with Sri Lanka, both having two successive victories. Sri Lanka won their first game against Bangladesh by 37 runs before disposing Zimbabwe by 144 runs on Tuesday. Brian Lara's West Indies thrashed Zimbabwe by nine wickets in their opening match. They meet in Mumbai on October 14 to decide the seeding between the two qualifiers.

Bangladesh, on the other hand will stay back at Jaipur to play for pride against Zimbabwe on Friday.

Back in the days match Bangladesh got off to the brightest possible start they could have imagined after skipper Habibul won the toss and decided to go with the popular demand of batting first.

With Aftab Ahmad coming good with his fearless strokeplay, Bangladesh were on a firm footing at 95-1 in the 20th over despite the early dismissal of Mohammad Ashraful (2).

But when it looked like the Tigers were heading for a big total disaster struck immediately after left-handed opener Shahriar Nafis (38), who put on 85 runs for the second wicket

attack' Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturer and Exporters Association (BKMEA) yesterday expressed concern over Tuesday's

rkers' wrath

vandalism and looting at different places in the capital. In a press release, BKMEA secre-

tary Shulabh Chowdhury said the garment workers did not carry out the vandalism. Instead, a number of troublemakers in the name of garments workers were responsible for the offences.

BKMEA also expressed resentment for the inaction of law enforcers during the attack and looting at garment factories. The BKMEA leader demanded

immediate arrest and exemplary punishment to those responsible for Tuesday's incident. He also called upon the political leaders and responsible section of the society to come forward and save the prime export sector of the country.

# with Aftab, turned a harmless off-

spin from Marlon Samules to a tame catch to Gayle in the slips.

Shahriar's departure sparked a stunning collapse that saw Bangladesh stumble to 96-4 with first-match hero Sakib Al Hasan dragging the third ball he faced on to his stump and Bashar out for a duck in successive games.

There were still hopes for a reasonable total with Aftab in the middle on a 55-ball 59 that featured seven boundaries and two big sixes. But after he threw his wickets unnecessarily lofting Samuels straight to Chanderpaul at long-on, a recovery was well and truly over. Bangladesh lost their last eight wickets for 66 runs. Wicketkeeper

Khaled Mashud stood in the ruins with a sedate unbeaten 22 off 59 balls

> Dwayne Bravo, who destroyed the lower order, was the most successful bowler with three for 14 in 10 overs while Taylor, Collymore and Samuels took two wickets each.

Janajuddha, the largest outlawed party in the region.

### Babar, IG FROM PAGE 1

complainant, took the complaint into cognisance and ordered judicial probe into the matter The accused include State

Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar, IGP Anwarul Iqbal, Deputy Director of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) Abdul Aziz Sarker, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner SM Mizanur Rahman and Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Tejgaon Kohinur Miah.

The other accused are five additional IGs of different departments, two DIGs, six DCs, 11 ADCs 33 ACs, 17 officers-in-charge (OCs)

of different police stations, 12 inspectors, 20 sub-inspectors (SIs) and 700 police members of various ranks.

As per the directives of Babar and Anwarul Igbal, a team of police led by DC Kohinur Miah attacked and clubbed a Jubo Ainjibi League procession in front of Rapa Plaza on Road No 27 in Dhanmondi from 12:30pm to 2:00pm on September

6, Uzzal said in his complaint. Their merciless beating left Awami League (AL) lawmaker Haji

Selim, the complainant and a large number of leaders and activists wounded. They also assaulted Jubo Mahila League leaders and activists leaving Upu Ukil and Advocate Tarana Halim hurt, Uzzal added.

Following the incident, Jubo Ainjibi League leaders and activists went to file a case but Dhanmondi police refused to entertain it, the complainant said

Advocates Sved Rezaur Rahman, Sahara Khatun, Nuruzzaman Nani, Abdul Baten Kamrul Islam, Barrister Sadia Arman and Abdur Rahman Howlader moved the case on behalf of the complainant.

ment unable to function. The AL has also directed its grassroots level leaders to make preparations for launching vigorous agitation if its demand is not met.

# Chief adviser, EC

#### FROM PAGE 1

present.

Citing the past election commission, the prime minister said the previous government (AL) had appointed partisan and controversial people to the Election Commission despite their protests, but their demand went unheeded

Khaleda, also chairperson of the ruling BNP, scoffed at her political opponents, saying that "it is good to dream but not in a zigzag way...there is no scope for assuming power through any zigzag course."

Accusing the opposition of trying to foil the coming polls, she said since they have no chances of going to power through election, they are conspiring to snatch people's voting and democratic rights.

The prime minister asserted that 'elections were held in the past and it will again be held in 2007...the only way to go to power is election. Those who will get electoral mandate will form the government."

In an oblique reference to the tribal and non-tribal conflicts in the hill tracts, Khaleda said tribal and settlers--all are the citizens of Bangladesh

She urged them to work unitedly for development of the CHT, especially for making the hill districts attractions for local and foreign tourists.

Chaired by Rangamati BNP President Nazimuddin Ahmed, the rally was also addressed among others, by Prime Minister's Parliamentary Affairs Advisor Salahuddin Qader Chowdhury, State Minister Amanullah Aman, Prime Minister's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury and State Minister Moni Swapan Dewan. Earlier, she addressed a rally at Khagracchari High Schhol ground

presided over by Abdul Wadud MP. The prime minister inaugurated a

number of development projects in the hill districts of Bandarban. Khagrachhari and Rangamati.

In Bandarban, she inauqurated Bandarban Betar Kendra, Tribal Cultural Institute, Shankha River Bridge, Meghla Tourism Motel and Technical Training Institute. In Khagrachhari, the prime

minister inaugurated Khagrachhar Gate. Town Beautification Project. Technical Training Institute and Youth Training Institute.

In Rangamati, Khaleda inaugu rated Technical Training Centre, Agriculture Training Institute and Youth Training Institute

tive of Bomang king yesterday met Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at Rangamati Circuit House and discussed development activities in three hill districts.

During the meeting, Shantu Larma expressed gratitude to the prime minister for her visit to the hill districts

The tribal kings pleaded that they should be involved more in the development activities of the hill districts and requested her for remuneration of headmen.

The prime minister assured that their demands would be met at the appropriate time and urged them to build the three hill districts as tourist cities

pressure from the "alternative powerhouse"--the source of power of Orion--the government accepted and approved the bid by August last year

The Bon Consortium is apparently a Bangladeshi registered project company. The claimed owners of the consortium are Orion Power Company and BN Corporation. Orion Power Company Ltd is a Bangladeshi company owned by Obaidul Karim. The company was created for this proiect.

### Protesters

FROM PAGE 16 At one stage police reportedly

began to club the agitating people leaving five to six injured. Police held Md Shamsher, 25, a

machine operator of Rupali Art Press at Anderkilla who was in the crowd and started beating him severely, witnesses said.

Police picked him along with the snatcher and took them to the Kotwali Police Station

Aggrieved staffs and owners of Anderkilla and Shahi Jame Mosque market put up barricades at four points of the intersection, causing serious congestion on the adjoining streets.

Demanding Shamsher's immediate release, they brought out precession and damaged two buses, two private cars, three CNG auto-rickshaws and hurled stones at a police pick-up and two police sergeants when they were passing the area.

The mob withdrew the barricade after police released Shamsher at around 1:30pm

"Policemen gave me some more beating in their pick-up all over my body putting off my clothes and locked me up inside the police station while they did not even touch the snatcher." Shamsher told The Daily Star

When contacted. Officer-in-Charge of Kotwali Police Station Md Moinuddin said police picked up the press staff by mistake.

South Korean Defense Minister Yoon Kwang-ung said that Seoul could enlarge its conventional arsenal to deal with a potentially nuclear-armed North Korea.

Scientists and other governments have said Monday's underground test has yet to be confirmed with some experts saying the blast was significantly smaller than even the first nuclear bombs dropped on Japan during World War II.

North Korea appeared to respond to that Wednesday, saying in its statement that it "successfully conducted an underground nuclear test under secure conditions."

In rare direct criticism of the communist regime from Seoul, South Korean President Roh Moohyun said the security threat cited by North Korea "either does not exist in reality, or is very exaggerated," according to South Korea's Yonhap

news agency. He spoke even as South Korea's military was checking its readiness for nuclear attack, Yonhap said. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended improving the military's defenses, possibly with state-of-the-art weapons to destroy nuclear missiles, the report said.

The top U.S. general in South Korea said that American forces are fully capable of deterring an attack despite the North's still-unconfirmed nuclear test.

"Be assured that the alliance has the forces necessary to deter aggression, and should deterrence fail, decisively defeat any North Korean attack against" South Korea, U.S. Army Gen. B.B. Bell said in a statement to troops. "U.S. forces have been well- trained to confront nuclear, biological and chemical threats.

About 29,500 U.S. soldiers are deployed in the South, a remnant of the 1950-53 Korean War that ended in a cease-fire, not a formal peace treaty

A total ban on imports and ships could be disastrous for North Korea. whose produce like clams and mushroom earns precious foreign currency on the Japanese market Ferries also serve as a major conduit of communication between the two countries, which have no diplomatic relations.

Wednesday.

Tokyo has already halted food aid and imposed limited financial sanctions against North Korea after test-fired seven missiles into waters between Japan and the Korean peninsula in July, including one capable of reaching the United States

A report that North Korea may have conducted a second test rattled nerves Wednesday before the Japanese government said there was no indication of a blast.

Japanese public broadcaster NHK reported around 8:30 a.m. that unidentified government sources were saying "tremors" had been detected in North Korea. South Korean and U.S. seismic monitoring stations said they hadn't detected any indications of a second test, findings backed by White House spokesman Blair Jones.

With the United Nations debating how to respond to North Korea. China agreed to punishment but not the severe sanctions backed by the U.S.

Beijing is seen as having the greatest outside leverage on North Korea as a traditional ally and top provider of badly needed economic and energy aid.

The United States asked the U.N. Security Council to impose a partial trade embargo including strict limits on Korea's weapons exports and freezing of related financial assets.

All imports would be inspected too, to filter materials that could be made into nuclear, chemical or biological weapons.

Meanwhile, CHT Regional Council Chairman Joytirindra Bodhipriya Larma alias Shantu Larma, Chakma King Debashish Roy, Maung king and a representa-