# Aziz decides his fate Terror plot

difficulties to make the EC effective enough to hold a credible election, hopes that there might be a positive outcome today. The advisers believe the CEC would agree to give way to someone else, paving the way for reorganisation of the EC.

Once Aziz stands down, President/Chief Adviser lajuddin Ahmed will appoint a new CEC and the reorganised EC will announce the schedule for the next parliamentary election.

The move came after 20 days since the advisers took the initiative to reconstitute the EC.

The CEC, who had earlier declined to consider the advisory council's request to step down, yesterday said he would take two days to decide on the next course of action regarding the president's

After meeting the CEC, the three advisers rushed to the Bangabhaban to inform lajuddin of the outcome of the talks. Later, they said they are now hopeful about an end to the crisis to come in a couple of days as the CEC himself wants to resolve the standoff.

Advocate Sultana Kamal did not elaborate on exactly what had been proposed to Aziz but said the prospective way out falls within the ambit of the constitution and hopefully, it will be acceptable to all.

Adviser M Azizul Haque said, "We cannot set him any time for decision. He [CEC] told us that he would inform the president about his decision in time '

Following the talks with the presidential delegates, the CEC declined to talk to reporters and so did the three other election commissioners who too were present at the

The council of advisers' meeting presided over by Chief Adviser lajuddin Ahmed discussed the developments in the talks.

Aziz, who assumed the office on May 23 last year, has been mired deep in controversy for his domineering attitude and somewhat outrageous remarks. Early in the year he went for a fresh voter list in a unilateral move ignoring the High Court directives

Except BNP and its allies, the major political parties, civil society members, diplomats and donor agencies have long been maintaining that a credible election is not possible under supervision of the present EC.

From the outset, the council of advisers has been having difficulty in their efforts to make the EC effective, as the CEC has remained rigid on his stance not to resign.

Only a few launches left

Meanwhile, Dhaka Stock

Sadarghat Launch Terminal in Dhaka.

Exchange defied the political drama

as share prices posted significant

gains vesterday while trading at

Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE)

Clashes in Natore began at noon

when 14-party activists fired shots at a

group of armed cadres of BNP and its

student front JCD, who had attempted

to attack a 14-party rally at

Chhayabani Cinema intersection,

according to police and eyewitnesses.

Shahin and some of his followers were

hit by bullets, a large group of JCD

activists retaliated by firing gunshots at

14-party men, sparking a fierce gun

Shahidul Islam Bachchu was shot and

his office at the old bus stand was

the groups traded gunshots from a

close distance several times in front of

police who played the role of mere

spectators during the clash that spilled

over to three other points Chhavabani

Cinema, Hemangini Bridge and Fire

reached the scene three hours later

and brought the situation under control

by clubbing the rival political activists,

motorcycles belonging to BNP activ-

ists and damaged the local office of

traded nearly 400 shots while police

fired 10 tear gas canisters and 60

bullets to disperse the clashing politi-

Afroz were rushed to Rajshahi Medical

College Hospital with critical wounds in

the head, chest and abdomen and

they were in the operation theatre till

Subir Dutt and Rezaul Karim were

Upazila AL general Secretary Ishaq

Ali. Chhatni UP chairman Tofazzal

Hossain, a UP member Mozir, and 14-

party activists Milon, Abu Taher, Nur

Hossain, Omar, Sohel, Reza, Opir and

Bangabandhu Avenue and Zero Point

areas were rocking with life yesterday

as demonstrators reigned over the

streets the whole day, marching on the

roads, chanting slogans and holding

criticising the CEC calling him 'shame-

less' and accusing the president and

Folk singers were singing parodies

rallies to enforce the blockade.

admitted to Police Lines Hospital.

Bullet-hit police sub-inspectors

Others who were injured are Lalpur

filing of this report at 7:00pm.

Bullet-hit JCD activists Matin and

According to police, both groups

Janata Bank during the clash

cal activists.

THE CAPITAL

(Aziz. go away)

The blockaders torched four

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab)

Natore BNP General Secretary

The clash further intensified when

As Natore JCD President Dewan

**NATORE CLASH** 

Peaceful blockade

Finally, an emergency meeting of

the advisory council with lajuddin Ahmed in the chair Sunday night decided to send a presidential delegation to request Aziz to revisit

The information regarding the president's move was also conveyed to the two major political parties yesterday.

Earlier on Saturday night, the president said he was ready to appoint two more election commissioners if the political parties seeking reconstitution of the EC agree.

### Fears for flooded Kenya refugees

**BBC ONLINE** 

Aid workers are seriously concerned for the health of some 80,000 Somali refugees living in eastern Kenya, which has been hit by catastrophic floods.

Thousands of latrines have flooded in one camp, leading to fears of the spread of cholera, a UN refugee agency official told the BBC.

"We are sleeping in the trees... wild animals are attacking the people." said refugee Rashid Abdi Ibrahim.

Aid agencies have launched an appeal for some 1.8 million people. Central Somalia, eastern Kenya

and south-eastern Ethiopia have all been hit by the floods. Somalia is worst affected, partly because of the lack of infrastructure

following 15 years of conflict and the lack of a central government. The region was devastated by

drought last year, leaving the earth unable to absorb the heavy rains, leading to flash floods. The UN has said the floods could

be the worst in the region for 50 years. The rains are expected to continue for another month.

Hyenas, crocodiles Mr Rashid said the aid agencies were not doing enough to help him and the other 80.000 refugees in the

camps near Dadaab He told the BBC's Network Africa programme that they had been ittacked by hyenas and snakes.

But the UNHCR's Geoff Wordley said the road to the area had been cut off by floodwaters.

"We cannot get large trucks with assistance in there now," he said. "Food distribution had to be abandoned... because flood waters

rose again. Not only that but some

food has been destroyed by water." He said that the UNHCR would help those who wished to be moved

Chhatra Shibir's (ICS) announcement

of their intention to resist 14-party at

Muktangan area today was not there

as the activists of the two student

fronts of two major parties of four-party

Muktangan on Sunday, left the place at

Police sealed off the area, letting no

2:00am yesterday.

there yesterday.

dispersed them.

for payment, it added.

But the plot broke down when the as yet unidentified suspects failed to reach agreement with the airport employee on the amount he would be paid to plant the luggage.

The prosecutor's office gave no details of which airport was involved.

Six suspects were arrested in Germany on Friday in connection with the plot, but five were released the following day. A sixth person was kept in custody in connection with a differ-

gated for allegedly belonging to a

Investigators searched nine apartments in the southern region of Rhineland-Palatinate and Hesse in central Germany looking for evidence, a spokesman said.

A spokesman for the interior minisoffice.

Germany was shaken this summer after it was discovered that homemade bombs hidden in suitcases failed to explode on two passenger trains, because of faulty detonators.

Two Lebanese men have been on July 31.

these speedboats.

Habib Enterprise.

delivered to the Bangladeshi peacekeeping mission in Sudan and not in Bangladesh where the two-year old boats are currently being used.

Sources said while the price tag of Tk 6.19 crore itself is highly inflated, it includes import duty and taxes to be payable to Bangladesh. But this would not be paid to Bangladesh, as the goods will be delivered in Sudan in November and January. Naval sources said the real value

around Tk 4 crore

pushed by a relative of the former prime minister along with a former political appointee of the then prime minister's office (PMO) and his friend in the Navy.

drive (complete assembly) at Tk ch (Furo 2 000) but order priced it at Tk 24.34 lakh

political party hold any programme

Blockaders vandalised a microbus, requisitioned for carrying police personnel, near Mirpur-10 roundabout and five other buses on Rokeya Sarani at Senpara. They also tried to set fire to those around 11:30am, but police

Gabtoli Bus Terminal remained lazy all day with no bus leaving or

Rickshaws, CNG-run threewheelers and human-haulers were only vehicles seen on the city streets as buses were kept off the streets fearing vandalism by the blockaders who disconnected Dhaka from the rest part of the country.

Crowding at the bus stops, rickshaw-pullers, and drivers of threewheelers and human haulers made brisk money as they charged multiplied fares banking on the severe shortage of transports. **THE COUNTRY** 

In Sirajganj, at least 12 people were injured when police baton-charged activists of JCD and Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) during a clash between them that erupted when they came face to face with processions at PTI intersection in Sirajganj town vesterday. Police brought the situation

under control after two hours. A queue about 3km long, of goods laden trucks bound for capital, on the highway was created when demonstrators blockaded the highway at different points.

In Bagerhat, AL activists enforcing the blockade came under attack by BNP activists at Kashempur Bazar. 8km off the town, at 11:00am. As the rivals got locked in a clash involving brickbats, sticks and sharp weapons, 12 from both sides were injured.

Port city Chittagong remained cut off from the rest of the country during the blockade that passed off peacefully for the most part.

Only loading and unloading of cargoes inside the port took place. Neither any truck nor any other transport with cargoes found a space for delivery beyond the ietty areas. Interdistrict transports also staved off the road but movement of other vehicles was quite normal on all city roads and thoroughfares.

chief adviser to the caretaker govern-Although vehicular movement was ment of being partisan while the most seriously disrupted, launch service popular slogan was "Aizza, Barit Ja" remained normal in Khulna and there Meanwhile, the tension that had was a huge rush at the launch termiarisen in the city since JCD and Islami

case or a bag onto a plane in return

ent matter.

All six suspects are being investiterrorist organisation.

try said he had nothing to add to the information given by the prosecutor's

charged with planting the suitcases on trains heading for the western cities of Hamm, near Dortmund, and Koblenz

### Navy cancels

FROM PAGE 16

Two of these orders, worth Tk 2.66 crore and 3.42 crore, were issued to one AJA International and the other worth Tk 11 lakh to one

Interestingly this supply will be

of the spare parts would be worth Tk 1.5 crore and even with taxes included, the prices would be

Sources said this whole deal was

The prices of the parts were highly inflated in the work orders, the sources pointed out. For instance, the manufacturer sells the "socket for cockpit" at Tk 2,288 (Euro 26). But the work order priced it at Tk 26,000 each. A gasket worth Tk 1,760 (Euro 20) has been priced at a staggering Tk 8.32 lakh each. Each of different types of rubber tubes has been priced between Tk 2,000 and Tk 6,760, while these are sold at prices below Tk 1,760 (Euro

The manufacturer sells a ring

### Two bombs

FROM PAGE 1

15 feet away, dodging the surveillance by intelligence officials on guard at the president's official

However, the president does not usually use the south gate of Bangabhaban and its adjacent road

The president yesterday went out through the north gate before the bombs went off. No one was injured in the explo-

Security personnel from inside the Bangabhaban rushed to the spot soon after the blasts, but could not apprehend anyone.

A piece of plastic used for biscuit packaging was found on the spot that had smell of explosive substances.

A Rab intelligence official told The Daily Star that the bombs were handmade but powerful and did not contain splinters

Requesting anonymity, he said the bombs might have been hurled from a speeding motorbike or a CNG auto rickshaw.

## 4-party declares

FROM PAGE 16 on popular support so they do not bother who is holding the post of the CEC. They urged 14-party leaders to avoid violence and to practice 'real politics' for welfare of the people.

Khoka, who presided over the rally, said they have the support of the majority of the population of the capital as well as of the whole country.

"We will prove that we are the biggest alliance in the country," said Khoka. He said people rejected Awami

League in 2001 and they are still supporting four-party alliance. He urged the leaders of 14-party coalition to take preparations for the upcoming election and to practice 'positive politics'

He requested all supporters of fourparty alliance to make their programme successful. Mirza Abbas, a former minister,

said four-party alliance did everything according to the constitution. Now 14party coalition is demanding things that the constitution does not support, he added. The advisers have already realised

Abbas. Barkatullah Bulu, Amir of City Jamat-e-Islami Rafikul Islam, and Moazzem Hossain Alal also spoke.

that they cannot do anything outside

the ambit of the constitution, said Mirza

# What will take

challenged in the High Court where he lost. The CEC then appealed to the Appellate Division. What we found unethical and as such unacceptable, particularly from a sitting judge of our highest court, was that during the time of his appeal he completed the work of the voter list that High Court gave a verdict against. This action cost the public exchequer Tk 64 crore. Then the Appellate Division found his decision wrong, forcing him to go for a totally new operation of updating the voter list, costing the public more money to the tune of many crores. Such was the nature of waste of money that the then finance minister. Saifur Rahman refused to release addition funds as there was no proper accountability of Tk 64 crore that he had so recklessly spent. It is when both the High Court

and later the Supreme Court (Appellate Division) found his actions wrong that we took the editorial position of asking him to quit. Our logic was straightforward. We concluded that the CEC had lost the moral authority to occupy his post and to head a commission that will have to be trusted by the whole nation to deliver a free and fair election. He no longer commanded universal respect of the public since he was found guilty both by the High Court and the Supreme Court. As a judge, we concluded, he should have shown greater respect for the High Court verdict than he showed by carrying on with the preparation for the voter list while his appeal was being heard. This further convinced us of his declining moral authority. Much has happened since then

Today the Chief Election Commissioner stands absolutely alone save for the support of the 4party alliance, whose some very senior leaders wanted him to go just the other day. (A side issue. Even today, there are serious allegations of impropriety about the way contracts were given out to printers to print the voter list. People who are in the know of things have voiced serious allegations of corruption. Many printers without any experience have been given work and those with experience have been left out. In fact the printers' association has gone public on this matter alleging corruption. We grant that the allegations could have come from disaruntled elements who did not get ă share of the printing pie. But shouldn't the CEC, as the head of the Election Commission, at least have made some inquiries and satisfied himself and the public that no wrong was done? How does one explain his total disinterest in the matter except to think that he does not care about financial discipline or accountability as was evidenced by the way he went about preparing the voter list? We haven't seen the CEC take any note of this public outcry, which, unfortunately got buried under a bigger national crisis.)

Yes, the CEC's post is a constitutional one, meaning it is not subject to the whims and caprice of the power of the day. It has been made so to keep it above all sorts of political and official influences and pressures. It has been kept beyond the reach of all other offices (he cannot be removed by a Supreme Judicial Council), including that of the Prime Minister and the President for the simple reason to let him carry out his work impartially to

conduct a free and fair election. All the provisions that make the Election Commission and the CEC and other commissioners so special have been made to help the CEC and the EC gain public confi dence. To gain the trust of the voters, to make the people feel that the CÉC will conduct an election that is beyond anybody's doubt so that we get a new set of people's representatives who truly repre-

sent public will. But what do we see today? Justice Aziz is using the constitutional nature of his position to save his job in the face of, what is now more than obvious, a widespread public outcry. Instead of protecting public interest he is subverting it by using the special dispensation that the constitution grants him.

The demand for removal of the CEC that was first started by the

# 14-party alliance has now been joined by the newly-formed LDP, a faction of the IOJ, Tariqat Federation, Jukta Front of Kader

Siddiqui and ASM Abdur Rab, and CPB. There are others like the JP of Anwar Hossain Manju which have asked for reforming the EC. In addition, civil society groups have also asked for EC reconstitution. In fact, except for the 4-party alliance there is practically no other political group that wants the CEC to con-The donor community, being totally non-political and speaking only from the point of view of

upholding democracy, has also

clearly said that the solution lies in

a newly constituted EC. The state-

ment of the European Parliament

has also asked for changes to the

So what else can be done to get the message to the CEC that he is no longer an implement of free and fair election but an impediment to it. He has become the biggest obstacle toward an election that should be participated by all parties. The CEC now stands between peace and confrontation and has become the most controversial person in the country. By all accounts he has lost acceptability to a large number of voters and as has become incapable of presiding over a free and fair elec-

We have tried to bring together the facts that the CEC now faces. These facts clearly show that he cannot carry on the function that the constitution bestows on him For him to still hold on to his present position amounts to using the constitution for personal gains. I would mean a total disrespect for the very documents he is pretending to protect. We sincerely urge him to take a note of the public mood and resign immediately and save the nation from further tur-

People serve history mostly by doing heroic deeds. But some serve it equally by not doing anything, in fact by withdrawing from designated responsibilities For Justice Aziz that time had come much earlier but he refused to acknowledge it. Like the passengers of the Titanic who refused to acknowledge that their ship could sink until the freezing Atlantic water touched their very feet, our CEC refused to see the water of public discontent surround him from all sides. (That is perhaps why he has closed the door on the journalists who can't enter his office any-

But unlike the passengers of the Titanic, Justice Aziz can still make an face-saving exit if he resigns now and thus save himself from future ignominy and the nation further loss of lives, resources and precious time left for holding the

### Ershad's JP

FROM PAGE 1

upcoming polls under him. "The CEC can resign from his post as per the constitution as the present political crisis is persisting iust for one person." JP Chairman HM Ershad said at a press conference at his party central office yesterday. "Through his resignation, all for the next general elections," he added.

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) under the banner of Jatiya Oikya Front and several other alliances have already joined the movement

for ouster of the CEC The deposed ruler also said that his party would not participate in the next general elections, if other parties boycott it. "We are in a dilemma as to whether or not to take part in the elections under the current CEC... it seems to me, we

will not take part." Replying to a query, Ershad said that his party is yet to decide about ioining any alliance.

Answering to another query, the JP chief said they have no other option but to accept the president as the chief adviser (CA) of the caretaker government, adding that they hope that the CA would act neutrally.

# Take action

Bangladesh

Blasting Awami League (AL) led 14-party alliance, Khaleda said, "Already the caretaker government demands. But they are not happy, even though nobody can meet their unconstitutional demands.'

The caretaker government is not there for meeting their [14-party's] unconstitutional demands," she "They are conspiring to weaken the

country by creating chaos only to ensure another quarter's benefits, she said adding that they are creating anarchy in the name of their illogical On the demonstrations for electricity during the fag end of her regime's tenure, the former prime minister said,

That was sabotage and now everything is okay even though the caretaker government did not set up any new power plants. It proves that the movement for power was planned and it was a conspiracy against our gov-She said. "People don't want chaos, they want elections held timely and they are ready for it. Elections

announced." On the price-hike of essentials, she said, "The country will not get rid of poverty if the government provided free launches. The income of the people increased during our tenure and we have created new employment opportunities." Blaming the 14-party, she said they

know that they will not win if the elec-

tions were held in a free and fair man-

must be held within the stipulated 90-

day time and a schedule should be

ner, so, they are trying to foil the elec-

"Now they [14-party] are trying to stop development of the country and create obstacles for exports and imports. People were not happy during the AL regime's tenure for their terrorist activities. The country was not safe in their hands. They tried to destroy the country in a planned way," she said.

country a bottomless basket after the independence from Pakistan but we made the country an emerging tiger." The BNP chairperson said people will vote for her party again as they

Khaleda said, "They [AL] made the

observed the development works during the four-party's tenure in power. "Awami League don't want elections as they know they will not win the elections," she again said adding that they (AL) want to make the country an

Asking the media for a balanced coverage of news, she said, "What you are showing now is harmful for the country." She said the images on TV of singing, dancing, chaotic and anarchic scenes on the streets are demeaning the nation.

Presided over by Siddique Ahmed Chowdhury, president of University Teachers Association of Bangladesh, the meeting was also addressed by Abu Ahmed. Akhtar Hossain Khan. Tahmina Akhtar, Moinul Islam, Aminur Rahman Majumdar and Atiqur

# **HC** benches to get senior, efficient judges

CJ assures SC Bar

Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassir Husain yesterday assured the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) of reconstituting the High Court benches with senior and efficient judges.

"At least three division benches with jurisdiction of writ, criminal and VAT and customs motions will be reconstituted by Sunday next," SCBA Secretary AM Amin Uddin quoted the CJ Syed JR Mudassir Husain as saying.

Amin said he was asked to meet the CJ at his chamber in the morning. "When I met him, the CJ informed me about the reconstitution of the benches. The news came a day after the

Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) criticised the recent actions of the chief justice for his "punitive deconstitution" of the High Court benches sidelining the senior judges. The SCBA had also warned the

CJ of launching an agitation programme for his resignation if its demands are not met by November Oli asks CEC,

commissione

## such bid," Jalil said. to step down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Executive President of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Col (Retd) Oli Ahmed yesterday urged the chief election commissioner and the election commissioners to resign immediately to rid the country of the present political crisis. Oli Ahmed made the statement

while addressing a mammoth public rally at Chandanaish Gachhbaria Degree College ground -- first public rally in Chittagong after forming LDP. BNP would no longer exist as it has turned into a camp of terrorists, corrupts and collaborators --

whom the people had always rejected. The people will definitely vote the pro-liberation war forces of LDP and the 14-party alliance into power in the next parliamentary election, observed Oli. Colonel Oli said he had declared a crusade against corruption and terrorism and the

people of Chittagong were united

behind LDP determined to banish

BNP for harbouring corrupts, terrorists and anti-liberation was forces "As BNP started harbouring and indulging in corruption and terrorism I had repeatedly made vain requests to Khaleda Zia to control her sons and the evil ele-

ments in the party," said Oli. The LDP executive president alleged that President and Chief Advisor lajuddin Ahmed failed to be the president of the country and rather, he proved himself to be the

president of Tarique Rahman. He blamed the president and the BNP chief for the present political unrest and consecutive violence in the country that left 30 people killed so far.

.... I had suggested Khaleda

Zia several times to subsidise

essential commodities to curb prices, but not a single paisa was provided for subsidy," complained the LDP chief. LDP would subsidise essential commodities and bring the prices within the reach of the common

people, if LDP is elected into power, the LDP leader said. He pledged that if LDP forms government he would not hesitate to produce the lawmakers and ministers from the party before the court and ensure their trial and

punishments Oli alleged that two attempts on his life were made after forming LDP and he warned against any

further attempts in future. Former state minister Ridwan Ahmed of Comilla, former lawmaker Salahuddin Mahmud of Chakoria, Jatiya Krishak Dhara President Enamul Hag of Dinaipur. LDP central Joint Secretary and Chittagong divisional coordinator Shahadat Hossain Selim, LDP Banshkhali upazila President Advocate Kafil Uddin, LDP Chittagong city unit leaders Sved Abul Bashar and Kamal Uddin Chowdhury also spoke at the meeting among others.

Chandanaish upazila LDP convenor Abdul Mannan Chowdhury, also the former chairman of Hashimpur union, presided over the rally Salahuddin Mahmud, former

lawmaker of Chakoria in Cox's Bazar, and recently elected chairman of Satkania Municipality Mohammadur Rahman joined LDP formally at the rally.

# Blockade unto EC

make them suffer and bring the country to a standstill." She went on, "We have repeatedly given the president time (to implement the tasks) and kept patience. But he did not pay any heed to our demands. The president is mainly responsible for the present

situation, and we have been forced to

enforce the blockade again as there

was no other way for us The AL chief said the people are now determined to ensure a free and fair election. Conspiracy by the evil forces cannot foil the movement for implementing the 11-point demand. Victory of the people is a must as the evil forces are going to be defeated through a united resistance, she

Hasina thanked the people for observing the blockade ignoring, what she said, threats and harass ment by the BNP-Jamaat alliance.

14-PARTY BRIEFING Briefing newsmen, Jalil accused lajuddin of pushing the country towards 'blockade-movement' by not taking steps to create a level playing ground for free and fair elections.

still time to implement those," said the AL general secretary.

Prior to the briefing, the 14-party at a meeting discussed the current

the 11-point demand is met. There is

'Our movement will continue until

political situation. Referring to the BNP chairper son's demand for announcement of election schedule without delay Jalil said they will not allow this until their l1-point demand is met. Announcement of polls schedule before that would simply mean departure of lajuddin and CEC MA

Aziz together, he warned.
The BNP-Jamaat coalition wants polls schedule now for holding an election under its blue-print to come back to power. "But we will resist any

Jalil announced that all programmes marking the Armed Forces Day today would be out of the purview of the blockade programme On this occasion, he congratulated the armed forces on behalf of the 14party.

Jalil reiterated the demand for

immediate cancellation of all contractual appointments through a single notice, and drastic changes both in the civil and police administration for creating a congenial atmosphere for

Blast rocks FROM PAGE 1 area where the blast took place is in a remote corner of West Bengal state, bordering the Himalayan countries of Bhutan and Nepal, police said.

Kamatapur Liberation Organisation (KLO) -- fighting for a separate homeland -- are known to be active in the region, police said. The KLO is known to maintain close links with the banned United Liberation Front of Asom, one of the

most powerful insurgent groups

operating in India's restive north-

Separatist rebels of the

to BNP-Jamaat are hindering free flow of information by not allowing journalists to enter the EC and the

demned this. demanded immediate arrest and punishment of BNP-Jamaat men who 'patronised' different militant

Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Sheikh Haque Inu, Abdur Rahman, Abdul Mannan, Sultan Mohammad Mansur Bhattacharya, Nurul Islam and Dilip

### Nepal king

ment for his actions. violated that same constitution by sacking the government so should no

Others blamed by the panel could face charges ranging from abuse of power to the killing of demonstrators.

he said On Feb. 1 2005, Gyanendra fired the government, assumed absolute

political parties and supported by the Maoists forced the king to hand back power to the politicians. "No one should interfere with the

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, who received a copy of the panel's findings on Monday, has already vowed to implement the

not been able to take action against

in the government that it will take action against the king. The panel, formed in May, interro-

prehensive peace deal with the multiparty government on Tuesday and join a new interim cabinet by Dec. 1. That administration is meant to hold special elections in 2007 for an

of the monarchy. The assembly has been a longrunning Maoist demand to end their

open "a new page in relations," adding

Earlier this month Muallem said

Damascus was ready to engage in a

'dialogue" with the United States in a

British Prime Minister Tony Blair

recently urged US President George

W Bush to involve Irag's neighbours

Syria and Iran in efforts to stabilise the

But violence continued unabated.

the southern outskirts of Baghdad of

men, reported to be Sunni Arabs,

kidnapped, tortured and killed execu-

last night as a retaliation" for car bomb-

ings in the largely Shia Al-Mashtel

neighbourhood of Baghdad on

Sunday that left at least 10 people

latest example of tit-for-tat sectarian

bloodletting that has left thousands

dead in and around Baghdad since it

that security forces were still hunting

for five Westerners -- four US citizens

and an Austrian -- kidnapped by

militiamen disguised as police near the

Kuwaiti border as they escorted a

vehicle convoy.

The US military announced the

death of two more servicemen in Iraq,

taking its losses since the invasion to

2,861, according to an AFP count

raided a mosque in Baghdad's Shia

bastion of Sadr City, which was alleg-

edly used as a cell to kidnap and

torture Iraqi civilians and soldiers.

5 brutally killed

It also said that security forces

based on Pentagon figures.

The British military said on Monday

was unleashed in February.

The kidnapping and killing was the

tion-style, a security source said.

Police recovered 14 corpses from

He said the men were "kidnapped

bid to achieve stability in Iraq and the

with Svria".

country.

dead.

# Iraq ministers

FROM PAGE 16 Oraibi was returning to Baghdad from the southern city of Amara when his convoy was struck by a roadside bomb on the outskirts of the capital,

province, the military said The marine was killed Sunday. Another soldier from the 89th

Muallem -- the first Syrian minister to visit Baghdad since the ouster of Saddam Hussein in 2003 -- met Maliki after calling for the withdrawal of

including US charges that Syria has

after Egyptians. On Sunday Iraqi authorities announced that the suicide bomber who attacked building labourers in the

At least 22 people were killed in the attack when the bomber posing as a contractor lured the workers towards him and then blew himself up.

that the key reason for the bloodshed was the presence of foreign troops. who have been in Iraq since the March 2003 US-led invasion

help "stabilise Iraq" to build unity, saying Syria "will back the country's political process and is

Zebari said Muallem's visit would

protection and cannot face punish-

power, jailed politicians and gagged the media. He said the move was aimed at crushing an anti-monarchy Maoist revolt that has killed at least 13,000 people since 1996.

human rights of the people on any pretext. No one is above the people

said Birahi

But analysts doubted the government would punish the monarch.

"In the past, the government has

Nepal Centre for Strategic Studies, a private think-tank "Generally, people don't have faith

ated nearly 300 people, but the king led to reply to its questions.

Another 16 people were killed in other attacks on Monday

Military Police Brigade died after wounds sustained when his vehicle was struck by a roadside bomb in

Baghdad homes by men disguised as policemen were found in the capital, At least 112 people were killed

foreign troops from the war-torn Muallem and Iraqi leaders are expected to discuss a range of issues.

Syrians make up the second largest group of foreign fighters entering Iraq

Shia city of Hilla was a Syrian.

Nearly 100 people died or were found murdered on Sunday as Muallem began his landmark trip. The Syrian minister however said

Hoshyar Zebari, he called for a timetable for a withdrawal of US-led troops to Muallem also urged Iragis to work

. Bangabhaban, and strongly con-The 14-party coordinator

Those present at the briefing included Abdur Razzak, Tofail Fazlul Karim Selim, Obaidul Quader Rashed Khan Menon, Hasanu Ahmed, Bimal Biswas, Pankai

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But Birahi told Reuters the king had longer enjoy privileges under the

But in April this year, weeks of often bloody street protests organised by

recommendations.

wrongdoers," said Lok Raj Baral of the

Maoist rebels plan to sign a com-

assembly charged with preparing a new constitution and deciding the fate

# decade-old revolt.

one of his aides told AFP.

that Iraq expected "complete relations

Insurgents killed two more US servicemen in Iraq, including a marine who was killed in the restive Al-Anbar

southeastern Baghdad on Saturday.
Also Monday, the bodies of 14 Sunni Arabs kidnapped from their

nationwide, following a week that had already seen hundreds of deaths.

failed to prevent militants from crossing the border into Iraq to fuel the US and British authorities have charged that Sunni insurgent groups receive aid from Syria to support the insurgency. The US military says

After meeting his Iragi counterpart

ready to offer all help required in maintaining the unity of Iraq".

window grill partially broken at Rafiqul's residence in the morning where there was no sign of any family member's movement inside.

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the house earlier and were hiding

Islam was out of the country till writing this report, police sources said.

### Police found the bodies in a pool of blood on the floor. All bodies had head injuries and other injury marks.

inside the house to commit the crime. Police sent the bodies to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital for their

### Police are still investigating to find out whether the criminals entered the house through the window or entered

No case was filed as Haji Rafiqul