# NEWS

## Graft, high freight

preferential market access to Japan and dominate global garment trade especially with the GSF (generalised system of preference) facility in the European market, low-labour cost and improved quality.

Still, they suggested, the gar-ment sector should be well prepared to compete with other international players.

Speaking on the issue of "How to make Bangladesh more attractive to the foreign investors", Eiji Sekine, managing director of YKK Bangladesh Pte Ltd, said corruption in government offices and complexity in investment procedure and export-import process are a cause of concern for foreign investors.

"If excess freight charge and high inland haulage charge from Chittagong to Dhaka ICD continue in future foreign investors will be discouraged to invest here," Sekine said. "Besides, foreign investors are also worried because of hartals and I think there is no need for calling hartals," he added.

He also had words of hope for Bangladesh. "Things are changing and I believe Transparency International will soon change Bangladesh's position in the corruption index.

**Two Indonesian** 

2 killed, 20,000 evacuated

volcanoes rumble

are rare.

Sekine said many apparel buyers not only from the European countries but also from the US and other countries are setting up offices in Bangladesh. "I think they are coming as they are benefited

REUTERS, Surabaya, Indonesia

officials say.

injured, police said.

Two volcanoes in Indonesia have

spewed rocks and ash high into the

air, killing two tourists and forcing

the evacuation of 20,000 people

Police said a Singaporean man and an Indonesian were killed when

Mount Bromo, a popular tourist

destination in East Java province,

hurled rocks the size of footballs. Five

other Indonesians were badly

A separate volcano in the coun-

try's far northeast also belched out

dust and smoke yesterday, forcing

authorities to evacuate as many as

Indonesia sits astride the geologi-

Officials said towns in the area

cally active Pacific "ring of fire". It has

had been covered by light ash after

Bromo blasted out smoke 1.8 miles

high. Few people live in the immedi-ate area of the volcano, some 46

miles south of Surabaya, the capital

of East Java and Indonesia's second

Visitors climb Bromo's slopes to

more than 100 active volcanoes.

20,000 people near its slopes.

#### from Bangladesh and they will be benefited even after post-MFA

regime Sotaro Nishikawa, representative of Jetro Dhaka, said the Japanese investment in Bangladesh last year stood at around \$48 million. "Japan would invest more in Bangladesh in near future," he asserted.

Tovovuki Morita, chief executive of Prominent Apparel, Dhaka, and Takao Kobayashi, general m a n a g e r o f M a r u b e n i Corporation, Dhaka, spoke on the theme, "how to export Bangladeshi garments to the Japanese textile

market" Morita said although China controls major share of Japanese apparel market, Bangladesh has an opportunity to enter into the anese market.

JBCCI President Matiur ahman said the launch of newlyformed JBCCI has advanced the cause of further strengthening and promoting trade and investment tween the two countries. JBCCI Vice-President Hideo

Ueno presented a paper titled Japanese Business Culture' that focused on how Bangladeshi businessmen can venture into Japan market. Abdul Haque, another JBCCI vice-president, also spoke.

tions of the 2,392-metre mountain

highest level of alert on Monday.

euninhabited.

notverystrong.'

officials added.

closed, officials said.

lation was unclear. There are a num-

ber of islands nearby, although many

out, and there are indications that it

will erupt," said Samuel Dalompha

an official of the Directorate of

Volcanology based on the island.

part of North Sulawesi province and

continuously, although they are still

"Earthquakes are also happening

The island's airport had been

More than 80 percent of residents

in the danger zone on the island had

been evacuated, but some men

had stayed to guard their villages,

e of the 1,320-metre volcano.

"There is a lot of smoke coming

Rafiqul Alam, president of Bangladesh Japan Information Technology (BJIT), and Hamidul Islam, general manager of BJIT made a multimedia presentation on "how to penetrate into Japanese software market"

#### of burn injuries **STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The United Commercial Bank Limited (UCBL) staff, who was set on fire, died of her injuries at a city clinic on Monday.

With 95 percent of her body burnt, Shaila Chowdhury Irani, 30, receptionist and operator of the UCBL, died at City Hospital at about 7:30pm after a 22-day strug-

**UCBL staff dies** 

Police sent her body to Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy at 11:30pm. Her relatives received the body yesterday noon.

She was buried at Charkaunia village of Pakundia upazila in Kishorganj. She left behind her husband and a 10-year-old son. Shaila's colleague Ranjit Barua,

who set fire on her on May 15 after dousing her with petrol on being refused an affair, jumped himself to death under a train in Motijheel area the same day.

## Lara solace

The most significant point he made was about the mental aspect. He told the boys that before trying to win it in the middle, they had to win it in their heads. That's something Brian thought was lacking in the Bangladesh team," Faruque added. "He showed what greatness is

FROM PAGE 1

all about by coming to our dressing room and giving us those tips. It meant a lot to all the players," said wicketkeeper Khaled Mashud.

#### So what did Lara say? "I spoke to the guys. I went to

their dressing room to tell them that I was very proud at the way they played their cricket.

"This was my first Test series against Bangladesh. I know the West Indies team was down there a couple of years ago. My only encounter with Bangladesh has been in a World Cup match and a few one-dayers back in Bangladesh a few years back. They played good eam cricket. They faltered in the field a bit and I think they need

Mount Awu on Sangihe island, something similar to the West Indies. They need to understand 1,400 miles northeast of Jakarta. began spewing ash last week and authorities put residents living on that it's got to be each session each day for five days when you are the island near the Philippines on the playing Tests. "If they get that together, they'll As many as 20,000 people have been evacuated. The island's popu-

see that it's not a necessity to have any stars and individuals in your line-up to win games. As long as they have a good collective effort, move forward and play consistently, they're going to get that first Test result very soon," said Lara

The world record holder in Test and first-class cricket also took aside a couple of individuals and talked to them personally.

"He asked Mohammad Ashraful why he got himself out like that in the second innings stressing on the fact that a batsman should never give his wicket away even if he is batting with the last man or is in a hopeless situation," said Faruque.

14

ately.

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administration.

Americans for years.

makes the ban effective immedi-

US officials want to disband

the al-Mahdi Army and arrest al-

Sadr for the April 2003 murder of

a rival cleric, although authorities

have deferred both goals to

reduce tensions in the Shia heart-

land south of Baghdad. Instead,

Allawi, himself a Shia, and Shia

The agreement also does not

cover the brigade organised by

22 undercover

The SB provided six of the teams,

An inspector will head each

team that will also have a sub-

inspector, two assistant sub-

inspectors (ASI) and two consta-

The government earlier intro-

been keeping a low profile.

FROM PAGE 12

added.

after a year

Top Ctg criminal

arms and ammunition in his cus-

tody some two weeks back, he

DB four, CID three and DMP pro-

clerics deal with al-Sadr.

FROM PAGE 1

bles.

vided nine teams.

## Car bombs kill

## Budget session

discussions

by-election.

session.

Hasina expressed her eagerness to Committee (Bac) sits at 4:30 this participate in the budget session. afternoon to decide the duration of Hasina has to attend the session this 12th session of the seventh also to save her membership in parliament which begins at 5pm parliament, as she has been absent and to allocate time for budget for about 80 consecutive days from its proceedings. During the session, Bikalpa

Deputy Leader of the Dhara Bangladesh, the new politi-Opposition Abdul Hamid told The cal party floated by former presi-Daily Star yesterday that they had dent Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury, not decided yet when they would oins the House represented by ioin the House. "It's certain that we lawmaker Mahi B Chowdhury are not joining the inaugural day of Mahi had resigned from the BNP the budget session. But we are and parliament on March 10 and eager to participate in the session." was re-election by the same con-The AL will hold its parliamenstituency, Munshiganj-1, in June-8

tary party meeting next week to decide its strategy in parliament. Apart from the passage of the "I'll consult the leader of the opposition on holding the parliamen-tary party meeting," Hamid said next fiscal year's budget, women lawmakers to the much-talkedabout 45 reserved seats are from his constituency in expected to be elected and several Kishorganj over telephone. He will laws will be passed during the return to Dhaka today.

Talking to The Daily Star, oppo-The AL plans to join in the sessition party whip Faruk Khan said, sion after the budget is placed, "Let the government place the budget first, then we'll decide sources said, adding, taking part in the budget discussions, its lawwhether we'll join the session, makers would speak on law and adding, "If we get scope to speak, order situation, price-spiral of we'll join.

The AL also has not decided yet whether it will nominate its depu ties to different parliamentary standing committees in the budge session. The party has representation only in six JS standing commit tees, and abstained from nominat ing deputies to other 45 committees, including those on 39 minis-

returned to parliament for one day on May 12 last to participate in an obituary reference on its slain To her deputies, Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh tries.

## Trauma at traumatology

#### FROM PAGE 1

found no doctor in their rooms till now. Could you kindly treat me?"

essentials and corruption.

The main opposition started its

boycott of the JS proceedings on

June 25, 2003. After 11 months, it

lawmaker Ahsanullah Master.

"Are you making complaints against doctors?" Sayed asked the patient. He said politely "No, I just

request you to see me and my diagnostic reports.'

The doctor then told him it was not his business to see whether doctors were in their rooms and that he should not talk about it. He should just keep on waiting outside till doctors come

Sixty-year-old Mojibur Rahman with fractured foot bone came to the outdoor wing at about 7:00am from Dashmina in Patuakhali and was nervously waiting for a doctor in front of Room No-5. The duty doctor came at 9:30am.

Another patient, Shimu, 14, along with his father waited in front of Room No-4, where Dr Shamima came at 9:45 am. "I would not have come so early if I knew about such delayed arrival of doctors," the boy

## Revenue ombudsman

#### FROM PAGE 1

and is expected to change the garment exports in a big way from January 2005.

As all these measures call for Revenue ombudsman system huge spending, the budget for FY has been introduced in Pakistan -05 has been designed at a and the USA To see how

#### Venus, Sun FROM PAGE 1

among schoolchildren of glimps-ing the celestial alignment not witnessed by anyone living since 1882.

Salauddin Swapan, a student of University of Development Alternative, said he was waiting for the rare moment -- informed by the media a few days ago. "I was wor-ried about the weather as the cloudy sky hinders visibility of the sun.

The spectacle could be witlessed, weather permitting, by five billion people in a giant swathe stretching from Australia to America, embracing all Europe, Africa and much of Asia, AFP reports.

The special alignment of the Earth and Venus required to bring about such an event occurs in irregular pairs, with the next set for 2012

"The event 2012 may not be the same as today's as the orbit is not quite circular," said Professor Tofazzal Hossain of the physics department at Dhaka University.

He said the next transit could be vitnessed from here as the latitude line runs through Bangladesh.

Earlier, astronomers cautioned that looking directly at the sun with the unaided eye, and worse still through an open telescope or binoculars can result in blindness.

The phenomenon has particular historical significance. The 17th and 18th century transits were used by the astronomers of the day to work out fundamental facts about the solar system.

oil exporter in five weeks. Employing a method of triangulation (parallax), they were able to calculate the distance between the dom, battling militants loyal to Saudi-born Ösama bin Laden's Earth and the sun -- the so-called al-Oaeda network, heightened astronomical unit (AU) -- which is fears on Tuesday among tens of about 149.6 million km. thousands of expatriates, many

This allowed scientists to get their first real handle on the scale of of whom work in the oil industry. the solar system and the universe beyond. Department official confirmed

## 13 die

#### FROM PATE 12

Hospital sources said a Dhaka bound bus hit Golam Mostafa Rubel, 18, a first year student (Science Group), while he was was crossing the road near Ayesha Mosharraf Market at around 12:30pm

Fatally injured Rubel was rushed to Orthopaedic Hospital and later shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), where he succumbed to his injuries in the evening.

Son of Asadullah Mian, assistant manager of Bangladesh Bank in Motijheel, was returning to their residence at South Dania Bank Colony from the college.

#### AL man FROM PAGE 12

statements of 10 witnesses who described the incident but failed to identify any of the assailants.

ists visiting the ship, denied the gas Meanwhile, condition of Monwara Begum and Jognu Akhter who suffered critical burns in the arson remained unchanged till vesterday. Doctors said the victims

## **Four hostages** freed in Iraq

#### Gunmen kill American in Riyadh

REUTERS, Baghdad/ Riydah

coalition officials say.

US-led special forces have freed

three Italians and a Pole held

hostage in Iraq and captured

some of their abductors in a

bloodless rescue mission in Iraq,

"This was a happy ending to a

story that could have been

tragic," Italian Prime Minister

Silvio Berlusconi said on state

television yesterday. He said the

men were being flown by helicop-

ter to Baghdad and were due to

security firm were abducted on

April 12 near Baghdad. One was

cilled after Italy refused to bow to

demands to withdraw its 2,700

troops from Iraq. The Polish

businessman was seized at his

In Riydah, gunmen shot dead

an American who worked for a US

contracting firm in the Saudi

capital, the fifth assault on

Westerners in the world's leading

The latest killing in the king-

In Washington, a US State

that an American man was killed

in Riyadh but said he could not

provide details, pending notifica-

"I can confirm that an

American was killed," said the US

official, who asked not to be

identified. "We don't yet have any

when a third LPG tank was cut

open sending gas gushing out," a shipyard worker said. "The other

two tanks were sunk in the sea for

sludge or chemical remains inside

to wash away. The tanks will be

retrieved after they become dan-

Earlier, a group of pressmen who

went to cover the incident from the

city faced obstruction on their way

The guards and staff of the

shipyard, who stopped the journal-

details ... to say who did this.'

Ctg scrap

**OBSTRUCTION TO** 

**JOURNALISTS** 

FROM PAGE 1

ger-free.

to the yard.

tion of the family.

Baghdad office last week.

Four Italians working for a US

return to Italy on Wednesday.

Police said an American was tilled after gunshots were fired at his house in eastern Riyadh.

Other security sources quoted witnesses as saying the American was leaving a clinic when gunmen in a car followed him to his home and opened fire at him, killing him instantly.

The American had worked for US contracting company Vinnell, a unit of Northrop Grumman Corp which helps train the Saudi National Guard, an elite force for the pro-U.S. monarchy.

Yesterday's shooting came after suspected al-Qaeda militants shot dead on Sunday Irish cameraman Simon Cumbers, 36, and critically wounded BBC security correspondent Frank Gardner, 42, in a Riyadh area known as a militant stronghold.

Al-Qaeda militants also killed 22 people, 19 of them expatriates, in a shooting and hostage-taking spree in the oil city of Khobar last month. The assault helped push oil prices to record highs on fears of instability in the kingdom.

**Plane crashes** off Gabon coast, 19 feared killed

#### **REUTERS,** *Libreville*

A passenger plane carrying at least 29 people has plunged into the sea off Gabon and 10 people have been rescued, officials from the aircraft's operator Gabon Express say.

A French army helicopter helped rescue the 10 who were taken to a hospital yesterday in the central African country's capital Libreville. Divers were still trying to reach others trapped inside the plane hundreds of metres (yards) away from the coast.

Local fishermen were also helping in the rescue effort.

"Rescuers have managed to get into the aircraft and we are waiting to see what the outcome is," an official from Gabon's transport ministry told local television.

The plane was travelling from Libreville to Franceville in the southeast of the former French colony, via Port-Gentil, the economic capital.

One airline official and a Western diplomat said that 26 passengers, including Africans and Vesterners, and three crew members were aboard the plane when it crashed

Locals alleged some shipyard workers threatened them with dire "There seem to have been 26 consequences after they talked to registered passengers plus a pilot,

Nitor Director Prof Sirajul Islam said, "Doctors are not supposed to come at 9:30 am or later. As patients' ticket entry starts at 8:00 am, they must be on duty by 8:30am at the latest. "I will take steps to improve the situation," he added.

said. Shefali Begum, who came for treatment of her two-year-old

daughter, said "I have been waiting here but don't know when a doctor will see my child."

are being forced to pay illogical

amounts, they can appeal to the

ombudsman for remedy and

Mohammad Abul Hussain has

visited Pakistan and upon return

filed a report to the finance minister

present cost of living and the gov-

ernment's ability to bear additional

the pay commission's report, the

government is likely to go for a new

pay scale for its employees from

anuary 2005. The government is

also considering paying a sort of

dearness allowance to its employ-

ees for the interim period, they

crore for agricultural subsidies,

which is Tk 300 crore in the current

Ministry acts

The budget is likely to allot Tk 850

Sources said, upon scrutinising

Soon after the budget is passed, a

on Sunday last.

expenses.

added.

budget.

FROM PAGE 1

sources.

redress," said the NBR source.

Rubel Ahmed from Mohammadpur said, " Dr

Shamima neither saw my X-ray report and other pathological test reports nor did she tell me whether my bone joint dislocation was now alright or not. She just asked me to come again on Saturday next."

Patients and hospital sources alleged many of the doctors behave this way mostly to compel patients to see them at their private cham-

features on brochures that advertise Indonesia's natural wonders. But while it has long been active, erup-

### Assailants

watch the sunrise and the ve

#### FROM PAGE 12

largest city.

day. As he refused, the man came again after 20 minutes with about 30 men and tried to barge into the house. The gang sprayed bullets through three windows, injured the family members and ransacked the furniture.

The injured were admitted to orthopaedic hospital in the capital.

## Bangla Bhai FROM PAGE 12

Naogaon, including lawmakers, state ministers and deputy ministers, are now getting cold because of police crackdown on IMIB men. sources said.

" Our commander (Bangla Bhai) is so upset that he did not attend mobile calls even from a state minister five times yesterday," said a IMIB leader. "Bangla Bhai did so because he believes police started the crackdown on the JMJB as local BNP leaders stopped supporting it," he added.

Locals in Raninagar and Atrai upazilas of Noagaon alleged police are picking up innocent people terming them operatives of either the JMJB or the banned Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) and releasing only those giving them bribe.

The JMJB still continues its activities including forcible collection of toll and abduction of people for ransom in the two upazilas, they further alleged.

The militant outfit is blamed for killing at least nine suspected outlaws in its 'vigilante operation' in the northwest region since April 1. Its actions drew sharp attention from the media and strong protest from major political parties.

It started its militant activities after some relatives and friends of local lawmakers were killed in armed attacks blamed on underground operatives of the PBCP. Besides, a court order sending to jail three JMJB operatives including an area commander added fuel to its operation.

The three were accused in a case for the murder of retired army man Sheikh Farid at Raninagar in Noagaon.

## Scholastica

FROM PAGE 12 managing committee in violation of government rules and avoids discussions with guardians, they

The guardians said they met the state minister for education and sought his intervention to end such a situation.

"We believe the government should come forward to break the vicious circle of English medium schools, which do not follow any government rule," said another guardian.

Speaking to The Daily Star Chairperson of the school Yasmeen Murshed however said they did not enhance annual enrolment fee by 50 per cent, rather it was enhanced to Tk 15,000 from Tk 12,000 previously.

"It is not an exorbitant rate and we fixed it keeping in view the fees in other leading Bengali and English medium school," she said. Yasmeen said tuition fees were

enhanced considering the huge establishment cost. "We need to pay house rent and utility bills as a the coalition has opted to let commercial entity despite being an educational institution," she

She also said students are advised to buy only school diary from a particular shop and nothing

If guardians have some griev-ances, they can be resolved by sitting across the table, she said.

#### B Chy demands FROM PAGE 12

He assured the bereaved family members that BDB would not let the culprits get away with the killing. It would put up a strong resistance against them.

Masum was buried at the family graveyard.

The newly elected lawmaker Mahi B Chowdhury, meanwhile, visited Masum's home to express his sympathy to the bereaved family members.

Masum was killed and several others were injured in an attack on the victory procession of MP-elect Mahi B Chowdhury at Kamargaon in Srinagar upazila on Monday.

Masum, 22, was chopped to death and his brother Mamun was critically wounded when they were leading a procession to join the mainstream of the rally at Srinagar at around 4:00pm.

massive figure of Tk 60,000 crore, Tk 8,000 crore higher than the current

Under the interim constitution The demands for the new but adopted in March, armed groups unavoidable expenditures come at outside government control will be a moment when the government banned as of June 30 when power has become more cash-strapped than ever, as the country for the last transfers from the US-run occupafew years has been getting progrestion authority to the new interim sively lesser amounts of foreign aids.

In the first nine months of the Coalition officials said the current fiscal year, low-cost foreign agreement announced Monday deficit financing has seen a 69percent or Tk 2.448-crore decline to stand at Tk 1,070.99 crore, com-Some of the nine militias have pared to the corresponding period of the previous fiscal year. High-cost effectively dissolved already, and domestic deficit borrowing on the others, notably two Kurdish other hand has increased over the groups, have been allied with the period by 22.45 percent to 3,970.25 crore.

> "Such a downtrend in foreign aids calls for increasing internal borrowing. But increasing domestic borrowing leads to accelerated inflation rate and bigger interest burden on the government, which the finance ministry wants to avoid," said an foreign ministry official. "That's why the government will strengthen collection of internal resources," he explained.

The new budget sees higher income prospects. It has set a target for the National Board of Revenue (NBR) 16 percent higher than the current one. "This means the NBR will have to raise more than 32,000 crore taka in the coming fiscal," an NBR source said

In the non-NBR area, the government has set a revenue target of Tk8,000 crore.

The combined revenue collections by the NBR and non-NBR entities will leave a deficit of about Tk 20,000 crore, which has to be covered by foreign aids and internal borrowing.

In the next fiscal year, the government also projects a lower import tax collection with a view to duced Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) from Pahela Baishakh -- the fulfilling the trade liberalisation first month of Bangla New Year -- to conditions, sources said. "That's combat crime. However, the elite why the government will pay more focus on VAT [value-added tax] force formed predominantly with members of the armed forces has and income tax collection," an NBR source noted.

> In this background, the decision to commission a revenue ombudsman comes as a precautionary measure so that the drive to achieve revenue target next year does not produce harassment for the taxpayers.

He said he did his SSC from "The ombudsman will see Rangunia Khilmohal High School. whether taxes are collected justly His family sent him to Saudi Arabia and properly. If taxpayers feel they in 2001 from where he returned

functions, a team led by State Minister for Finance Shah to fully recover from the injuries.

## SUST teacher

#### FROM PAGE 12 at 3:30pm where a board of foren-

temporary pay commission will be formed, which within three months sic experts is expected to perform the dissection, morgue sources will submit its report outlining a said new pay structure in the light of the

According to the primary inquest report, the partly decomposed body had black marks in the hands and legs, stitches and bandages in the stomach and blood oozed out of the nose.

A Dhaka court ordered Gulshan police to exhume the corpse to confirm the cause of her death following a petition filed by her mother Hosne Ara Islam with the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate on Monday.

Hosne Ara, in her petition, alleged that Motawakkel and Mituli killed her daughter in a preplanned manner by taking her to hospital in the name of treatment.

The victim's relatives yesterday claimed that the assistant professor went to her husband's apart-(OSD) at the shipping ministry and transferred Engineer and Ship Surveyor at Sadarghat launch ment house in Gulshan at 11:15pm on May 26 in good health but hours terminal AKM Fakhrul Islam to later Mituli told them that Fahmida Barisal, according to ministry fell sick and was taken to a hospital in critical condition.

> She died the next day at 10:15pm at Shamorita Hospital where she was transferred from a private clinic though her relatives insisted on her shifting to another hospital, they added.

### Another trader

FROM PAGE 1

Family members said they were trying to negotiate a deal with the kidnappers for Daud's release.

Harinakundu police said they have heard about the kidnap but nobody filed any case yet.

Police in Chuadanga district captured an alleged outlaw with five bombs from village Kairadanga in Alamdanga upazila on Monday.

Police said they raided the house of late Samser Malitha. Members of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) were holding a secret meeting there. Police nabbed Saker Malitha, son of Samser Malitha but could not arrest anyone else.

Police said the gang was preparing for a dacoity. A case has been filed against Saker.

the reporters.

leak

All activities at the shipyard remained suspended, as Nurul Islam, the cutting contractor of Foyjun Shipbreaking Yard and general secretary of ruling BNP's Sitakunda unit, died in a city clinic early yesterday.

Locals believe Nurul died after inhaling the gas as he was at the shipyard all day when the ship was being broken.

But the clinic in its death certificate said Nurul died of a cardiac arrest.

Later, it turned out that he was taken to the clinic drunk and physicians quoting his family said he took sleeping pills shortly before 10:00pm Monday.

co-pilot and a steward. Of those so far we know that 10 have survived and are in hospital," the diplomat told Reuters by telephone.

"The tail is sticking up out of the water. It clearly landed in such a way that some people had time to get out before it was submerged,' he added.

Africa's poorly maintained airlines are prone to disaster. Three planes crashed into the ground shortly after takeoff around the continent last year.

Oil-rich Gabon, home to 1.3 million people, is one of Africa's wealthiest countries with per capita income of \$4,700 a year according to central bank figures -many times the average for sub-Saharan Africa.

"What we are talking about here

is really major offensive military

operations that would have serious

political consequences like

Falluja," he told Radio Four's

## Unanimous support

#### FROM PAGE 12

Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing said positions on the draft were "coming close"

The US ambassador to the UN, John Negroponte, said earlier that Washington and London had made a major effort to take the views of various delegations into account during the closed-door consultations.

"We are putting it to a vote on Tuesday afternoon," Negroponte told reporters during a pause in the discussions

Addressing the Security Council before it began discussing the draft, UN Iraq envoy Lakhdar Brahimi said it would take eight months from the time of forming an interim government before credible elections could take place.

"The solution to Iraq's current challenges will take years, not months to overcome," he said in a report on his fact-finding mission to Iraq in April.

The US rejected a proposal by France that would have given Iraq a virtual veto over operations by coalition forces in Iraq after the 30 [une handover.

But later, the text was amended to cover "the full range of fundamental security and policy issues, including policy on sensitive offensive operations"

issues

Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari has told the BBC that the new resolution will allow for closer co-operation on key security

#### Today programme. "We believe that we as Iraqis understand the situation better on the ground.' The newly appointed Iraqi Prime Minister, Iyad Allawi, and US Secretary of State Colin Powell had already promised in letters to the Security Council to reach agree-

ment on policy for dealing with sensitive offensive military operations. But they did not spell out

whether the Iraqis would have to give their consent to each operation, or what would happen if they did not agree.

In his letter, Allawi repeats his request that foreign troops stay until we are able to provide security for ourselves".

The letter says a ministerial body will be established to "coordinate [with the multinational force] on all security policy and operations issues".

In his letter, Powell pledges to co-operate with Iraqis "on the full range of fundamental security and policy issues, including sensitive offensive operations".

The fourth draft of the resolution states that the mandate of the multinational force will expire after elections are held in Iraq, no later than 31 January 2005.

official programme, but it took effect yesterday. The investigation committee was dissolved after shipping experts questioned fairness of the

nimself surveyed the vessel. More changes are on the cards as the secretary recently cited a number of irregularities in the

Department of Shipping, the sources said. Motiur was also made OSD for neglect of duty last year following the capsize of MV Nasreen passenger launch in the Meghna river. lowever, he had himself reinstated in the position within 15 days through hectic lobbying with

the government high-up. He was also involved in delaying the government move to introduce a local classification society, according to the sources.

The changes followed newspaper reports on the sluggishness of the department to act decisively in the aftermath of the latest launch disasters.

probe by the committee as Fakhrul

Mynuddin Julfiquer replaces Fakhrul Islam who headed a committee to probe last month's launch disasters. Shipping Secretary Ismail Zabihullah issued the orders on Monday before leaving for Sweden to attend an