NEWS

Dhaka urged not

In the wake of such clashes, a highlevel BDR delegation reached Agartala in India yesterday noon for

a meeting with top BSF officials. DDG of BSF Gajendra Singh Chowdhury welcomed the eightmember BDR delegation led by Deputy Director General Brigadier General SM Golam Rabbani at Tripura border.

IG of BSF for Assam, Meghalaya, Monipur and Nagaland Shri SC Srivastava will lead a 14member Indian team.

The two sides sit at 9:00am today to deal with a number of contentious issues.

Apart from barbed wire fences construction of roads, bridges and pump houses on the Indian side within 150 yards of the no man's land will dominate the meeting, said an official at the BDR headquarters.

"Firing on and killing of innocent and unarmed Bangladeshi people by the BSF and Indian citizens are also likely to come up at the talks," the official said seeking anonymity. The other issues on the agenda

are BSF camps on the border, security, obstruction of development work on the Bangladesh side by the BSF, and smuggling of arms and ammunition and drugs.

Indian private television channel ETV yesterday quoted Rabbani as saying that Bangladesh would not allow the BSF to erect fences within 150 yards of the no man's land. Our Dinajpur correspondent

reports: A commander-level flag meeting between BDR and BSF will be held tomorrow near Barshalu

CONTEMPT CHARGE HC asks three dailies to reply by April 13 STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court vesterday asked

editors and publishers of three national dailies to submit by April 13 their affidavits in the contempt rule for running reports on court proceedings in a prayer filed by former inspector general of police Shahudul Haque.

The order came when editors and publishers of the three newspapers -- The Independent. The Daily Star, and The Daily Amar Desh sought for a four-week time for submitting the affidavits.

The newspapers face a contempt charge for carrying a report of United News of Bangladesh (UNB) on March 1. The report, released by news agency UNB the previous day, dealt with rejection of a court prayer filed by former IGP Shahudul.

On an application drawing atten-FROM PAGE 16 tion of the court to the report, Advocate Khandaker Mahbubuddin Dhaka. Ahmed MP told the court on March 2 that the information in the report was

wrong issue. response to the application The

village in Atoari upazila of Panchagarh district to defuse

border tension. Colonel Kaiser Uddin, sector commander of 15 rifle battalion of Dinajpur, will lead the Bangaldesh side while Commander OP Gour from Kishanganj BSF camp will lead

the Indian team The BDR and BSF repeatedly traded fire following a dispute over the construction of a dam at Barshalupara in Atoari upazila, panicking people of the area.

According to BDR, Water Development Board (WDB) and other sources, BSF members of Moragati outpost along with over 100 Indian villagers intruded into Bangladesh territory yesterday morning and attempted to stop construction of the dam. They also tried to loot construction materials.

BDR personnel and workers foiled their bid, local sources said.

Habigani FROM PAGE 16

the returning officer or assistant returning officer is March 29. Scrutiny of nomination papers will be held on March 30 while the last date of withdrawal of candidature is April 25. The seat fell vacant with the

assassination of former Finance Minister and Awami League leader Shah AMS Kibria in a grisly grenade attack at Boidyer Bazar in Habigan Sadar uapzila on January 27.

ZIA BOMB HOAX Phone call made to trouble Emirates Police tell court **COURT CORRESPONDENT**

Mahmud Hasan Chishti, arrested on charge of making a bomb hoax at Zia International Airport (ZIA), was placed on a three-day remand vesterday

Airport police produced Chisti, an employee of Emirates Airlines, before the Court of Chief etropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka at 1:30pm, seeking a seven-day remand. The police told the court Chisti

made the hoax call to trouble the authorities of Emirates Airlines llowing a conflict with them. He was arrested at around 30pm on Sunday after Civil viation Authority of Bangladesh

(CAAB) officials detected his phone number through a caller ID system. A Kuwait-bound flight at 7:00am with 200 passengers was post-

poned for four hours as an unidentified caller threatened to blow up the aircraft the same day.

Gulshan OC

named Shahid signalled him to pull over to receive records of a case Metropolitan Sessions Judge filed against the car. He gave a slip wherein the num-After the hearing, Judge Momin per of the case was mentioned as Ullah fixed today for order on the

accused cons are O

9 INDIANS **Police quiz BNP** leaders

UNB, Comilla

Police yesterday interrogated Laksham upazila BNP President and former MP Saiful Islam Hiru and three others as to why nine Indians were engaged in building the podium for the prime minister's public meetina

The other three grilled are Karun Kumar Dev Roy, member of the gate and podium building committee, Nuru Mia, owner of the jeep that carried the Indians from border, and

its driver Zahir. On Sunday night, police interrogated Swapan Saha, senior vicepresident of the upazila BNP and convenor of the podiumconstruction sub-committee, for

our hours. The investigation team also rilled Amin, the caretaker of Hotel Plaza where the Indians stayed after they were brought in for the work.

"inconsistencies" in their

As a four-day remand of the

Meanwhile, a four-member commit-

Indians ends today, police said they

are likely to be taken on fresh

tee, formed Sunday with Additional Police Superintendent Lutful Kabir as its

convenor, is investigating the suspi-

cious preparatory work for the prime

minister's Laksham public meeting

which was postponed following the

detection and arrest of the Indian

Laksham from the Indian State of

Tripura without passport, claimed

themselves as decorator-workers

gence for the third day of a four-day

of two daughters of Swapan Saha.

court that the three were on duty at the time of the incident. He also

described the incident that took

place at Shahbagh intersection on

After the incident, the same

bench directed the traffic DC to

appear before the court with a report

giving the names of the traffic police

and the records of the case filed in

The incident took place on March

6, when Justice Sinha was on his

way to court with his daughter to

drop her at Vigarunnesa Noon

School and College. As they

reached Shahbagh intersection at

about 8:45am, a traffic police

3 policemen

They were quizzed by intelli-

during police interrogation.

The group of nine, who came to

remand for further interrogation.

interest of investigation"

noticed

statements.

workers on Friday.

remand.

FROM PAGE 1

March 6.

2004.

Police declined to reveal the outcome of the interrogation "for the The arrested Indians were mendations quizzed yesterday. Police said they

"We will complete this by mid May, before the end of the tenure of the incumbent chief election commissioner (CEC)," said AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil who moderated the roundtable.

Gono Forum President and eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain said, "Without reforms in the existing system of forming caretaker government and the Election Commission, the elections can not be free, fair and just."

"It's an urgent matter and we all should mobilise people to realise the reform demands," he said suggesting the appointment of an honest, neutral, non-partisan and efficient person acceptable to all as the chief adviser.

Comparing election to a game, Dr Kamal said, "If the umpire or the referee of the game is not neutral and impartial, none accepts its results.

Different sources said Goutam Referring to the interim govern-Bhoumik, the owner of Tarekeswar Decorator at Pratapgar in Agartala, ment of 1990, he said, "We did not get enough time to take public used to build podiums for big funcopinion on the provision of appointtions in Comilla. They had also worked for the wedding ceremonies ing an acceptable person rather than the chief justice as the head of the interim government."

"We have gathered experiences in the last two elections of 1996 and 2001 and should go for reform of the system to ensure true public repre-(South) Ansar Uddin Khan Pathan sentation in parliament," he said. yesterday disclosed before the

On strengthening the EC, he proposed that the commission will have to have the power to formulate its own budget and appoint staff who will run the election instead of the employees deputed from the administration cadre

"I have received a complaint from a member of the Election Commission that his orders were not carried out due to intervention of a secretarv." Dr Kamal said.

Without naming anyone, he said reforms in the caretaker governconcept of caretaker government.. questions have been raised about how the interim body is doing its

duties," he said. Justice KM Sobhan said rules **CCC ELECTION** will have to be framed so that the caretaker government cannot issue AL nominates any ordinance before the election. He proposed introduction of international election observers from the United Nations and the European Union

Reforms in caretaker

FROM PAGE 1

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President Hasanul Haque Inu the Election Commission (EC). The discussants suggested tabled a few proposals regarding selecting a non-partisan and neutral the functioning of EC. He demanded resignation of the present CEC and person from any profession, who is acceptable to all, as the head of appointment of a new one through caretaker government to hold the consensus. national elections in a free and fair "The polls should be conducted by permanent officials of the EC," he

manner. Apprehending rigging in the next said opposing the existing system of election, they said the government appointing returning officers and assistant returning officers from the has extended the retirement age of justices with an ill motive to make a administration cadre of the governperson loyal to them the chief of the ment. next caretaker government.

The main opposition Awami League (AL) organised the roundtable titled "Democracy and Election: necessity of reforming the caretaker government system" at a city hotel as part of its campaign for reforms of the system.

Professor Shamsul Huda Haroon After the discussion by lawmak suggested amending the system of ers, politicians, legal experts and appointing a judge as the head of political scientists, the meeting decided to form an 'all-party commitcaretaker government. He said the udges should be included in the tee' within a couple of days to work advisorv committee of the caretaker out concrete proposals on the issue. The committee will seek opinions government.

"You should not always pick up the chief justice as the chief of the and suggestions of all concerned about the caretaker government reforms and make a set of recomcaretaker government. Better you can choose the chief from a wide range of professionals, credible to

all party and opinions, coming out from the narrow one," he suggested. opposite in the caretaker governthe head of three services -- army

some people are trying to create confusion about the demand of ment system. "We want to make it clear that we are not against the

UAE bans use of child camel jockeys

AFP, Abu Dhabi

The United Arab Emirates on Sunday ordered a ban on the use of children as jockeys in camel races a favorite sport in the oil-rich Gulf region that has been widely criticised over the use of minors brought in from poor parts of the world.

From April 16, it will be illegal for jockeys under the age of 16 and weighing less than 45 kilograms (100 pounds) to race, according to the official WAM news agency. A similar move was announced

in December by neighbouring Qatar, which has plans to instead use robots as jockeys. Since 1993, the UAE has banned the use of children under 15 but abuses are widespread and no-one

has ever being brought to justice. Gulf Arab monarchies are trying to bring order to the national sport in the face of protests over the traffick ing of young children from the Indian subcontinent and Africa as jockeys.

The US State Department and human rights groups have raised "In parliamentary system, head of the state is a titular head. But it is the alarm over the exploitation of children by traffickers who pay impoverished parents a paltry sum ment. Here, head of the state is also or simply kidnap their victims

The children, mostly from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan, are then smuggled into the Gulf states

They are often starved by employers to keep them light and maximize their racing potential. Mounting camels three times their height, the children -- some as young as four -- face the risk of being thrown off and trampled.

Cabinet okays formation of wage body

new wage structures and related

facilities for the workers of the state-

cabinet meeting held at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) with Prime

It okayed the internal procure-

ment target and price of wheat in

2005. As per the cabinet decision,

50,000 metric tons of wheat will be

purchased from the growers at Tk

12 per kilogram from March 24 to

tee on abandoned property was

The report of the special commit-

Minister Khaleda Zia in the chair.

The approval came in the weekly

run industrial units.

June 30.

were present in the meeting. BSS, Dhaka OTHER PROPOSALS

The discussants came up with a wide range of reform proposals for The cabinet yesterday approved a the caretaker government system proposal for the formation of and the EC national wages and productivity commission-2005 to recommend

The JSD president also

demanded introduction of voter

identity cards to check false voting

He sought a clear definition of the

routine duties and policymaking

navy and air force. The caretake

government is also accountable to him. For all this reasons, a balance

of power in the caretaker govern-

ment is needed," he added.

Workers Party General Secretary

Bimal Biswas, Gonotantri Party

President Azizul Islam Khan, Pro

Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir. Prof

AK Azad Chowdhury, Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, Prof Harun-ur-Rashid, Editor of the Bangladesh

Observer Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury

and AL advisory body member Di

SA Malek took part in the discus-

Zillur Rahman, Amir Hossain Amu

Tofail Ahmed, Abdur Razzaq, Matia

Chowdhury and ASHK Sadeque

Senior Awami League leaders

sion.

Presenting the keynote,

work of the interim government.

They said the EC should have a separate secretariat of its own and it should have financial authority. The CEC and other election commissioners must be acceptable to all.

Not only the judges, member of other professions such as lawyers, teachers and former bureaucrats can be the chief of the caretaker ernment, they said.

Another proposal was that the nterim government will discharge only 'routine functions' and shall not take any 'policy decision'.

Powers of the president and chief of the interim government have to be defined clearly and charges of the armed forces division should be given upon the chief adviser and the armed forces should not have the magistracy power, they suggested.

Dr Kamal FROM PAGE 16

also placed in the meeting.

Dr Kamal was addressing a roundtable in the city organised by main opposition Awami League on proposal for reforms in the caretaker government system.

No conflict between the press and court

Says Dr Kamal on contempt charge

Shamaresh Baidya

Four killed

Petitioner's counsel Barrister

Azmalul Hossain also started his

The hearing will continue today

The government vesterday brought

several changes in the administra-

tion and made fresh appointments.

Amin has been appointed secretary

of the industries ministry. The post

felt vacant yesterday on expiry of

Anis Uddin Mia has been appointed

additional director general of the

Bureau of Manpower, Employment

and Training. Deputy Secretary of Ministry of

Jute and Textile Zakir Ahmed and

Secretary of Dhaka Wasa

appointed deputy commissioners

(DCs) of Barguna and Meherpur

districts. DC of Meherpur Mir Ahmed

has been transferred as the DC to

Shafiul Alam and Abul Mansur

Mohammad Faizullah have been

withdrawn and their services

vested in the Ministry of Commerce.

been given foreign posting and thus

Mohammad Mesbahuddin and

Secretary of the Bangladesh Textile

Mills Corporation Abu Bakar

Siddiqui have been made Officers

Political parties in Nepal are not

aligned with the Maoists, but have

called for talks with them to bring an

withdrawn from the districts.

on Special Duty (OSD).

Official sources said they have

Meanwhile, Member (Finance)

Civil Aviation Authority

DCs of Comilla and Barguna

Talukder have been

Director of Central Public Library

contract of Ayub Quadri.

Nurunnabi

Feni

Newly elevated Secretary Nurul

according to official notifications.

submission vesterday afternoon.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Newspapers always uphold dignity and honour of the court, there is no conflict between the press and court, Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday said during the hearing of the contempt petition in the High Court (HC) against two national dailies for running reports on a judge's alleged

result tampering. in Manila Dr Kamal, who defended the Prothom Alo, said before the HC jailbreak division bench comprisina Justice MA Matin and Justice AFM Abdur

BBC ONLINE Rahman that media always look upon the court as the last resort for At least four people have been killed in people.

an attempted jailbreak in the Philippines led by members of Muslim militants Abu If they (journalists) do not investigate and write reports, criminals Sayyaf, police sav will be spared. Newspaper is the The stand-off in Manila began only media where the criminals are earlier on Monday when a group of about 10 inmates snatched weapportrayed."

ons from their guards. Newsmen are doing their professional duties amidst risk as they are being attacked, even killed, he said, More changes adding, "The court is protector of free press.' in admin

"If the court awards punishment to journalists, where will they get STAFF CORRESPONDENT shelter?" he questioned.

Advocate Mahbube Alam, counsel for the Bhorer Kagoj publisher Saber Hossain Chowdhury, said in his submission that the report would be a scandalising one if it were false.

If punishment is given for a report without examining the truth. it will be difficult for journalists to publish the truth

The Prothom Alo and the Bhorer

Kagoj in their October 30 reports

said Additional Judge Faisal

Mahmud Faizee's LLB certificate

The judge's father Mohammad

Faiz filed a contempt petition on

November 8 against publisher of the

Prothom Alo Mahfuz Anam, its

Editor Matiur Rahman, reporters

Ekramul Haque Bulbul and Masud

Milad and publisher of the Bhorer

Kagoj Saber Hossain Chowdhury,

its Editor Abed Khan and reporter

hold business meetings with both

government officials and private

sector entrepreneurs. He is also

known for his philanthropic activities

The prince is likely to pay cour-

tesy calls on the president and

Scores of police and security forces,

including plain-clothes policemen,

patrolled the market and other

locations throughout the city, wit-

spokesman Gopendra Bahadui

protest demonstrations some of

Congress party Gopal Man

Shrestha said there was a heavy

police deployment in the capital and

that as many as 100 protestors may

have been detained or arrested

from scattered locations.

Entrepreneurs Organization

ncident." the official said.

Gyanendra's takeover.

were arrested.

"But no one was injured in the

Maoist leader Prachanda issued

a notice on the rebel website

Sunday calling for "general strikes.

a transport blockade and blockade

at local and regional level between

March 14 and April 1" to protest

people, including five former minis-

ters and several former lawmakers,

On Tuesday, more than 200

them were arrested," Pandey said.

"While they were trying to hold

Acting President of the Nepali

Saudi prince

FROM PAGE 16

around the globe.

orime minister.

FROM PAGE 16

nesses said

Pandev said.

the month

was allegedly counterfeit.

the High Court bench comprising Justice Joynul Abedin and Justice Miftah Uddin Choudhury had issued a contempt rule against editors, publishers and reporters of the three dailies. The court had also ordered them to appear before it in person.

Editor and Publisher of The Independent Mahbubul Alam, Editor and Publisher of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam, and Amar Desh Editor Amanullah Kabir and Publisher Hashmat Ali appeared before the court yesterday.

Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud moved on behalf of Dr Kamal Hossain, counsel for The Daily Star and The Independent while Advocate Joynul Abedin stood for the Amar Desh. Rokan was assisted by Barrister Sara Hossain and Barrister Tanjibul Alam.

Rokan submitted that the news report published by the newspapers was in fact supplied by news agency UNB, and no reporter from these three newspapers had anything to do with writing the report.

Khandaker Mahbubuddin Ahmed told the court vesterday that he did not submit any contempt petition, rather he just submitted an application to draw the court's attention to 'misreporting'

Barrister Rokan, at this point. pleaded with the court to clear the defendants of the charge. But the matter remained unresolved as the court fixed April 13 as the next date for hearing.

FROM PAGE 1

said.

of armed forces.

regard," Sheikh Selim added.

pension for lawmakers

Besides, the meeting discussed

Indian parliament members are

inclusion of a provision in the law of

entitled to pension after the expiry of

membership in parliament. "We will

examine the [Indian] pension sys-

tem before drafting the law," Selim

The meeting also discussed

amendment to the current Warrant

of Precedence to place the lawmak-

ers above all government officials

including Cabinet Secretary, Chief

Election Commissioner and chiefs

committee on privileges led by the

speaker at a meeting on January 18

The parliamentary standing

AL, BNP lawmakers

committee.

elaborate.

minister

Mohammad Nasir Uddin, subnspectors (SIs) Mohammad Sharif, Mostafizur Rahman, Asaduzzaman Asad, Mohammad Hasan, Zillu Khan, Mohammad Naveem, ser-Mohammad Rahman and geant constable Syed Zahir Uddin.

Engineer Monzurul Hossain of Power Development Department PWD), Work Assistant Yusuf Ali Manager Mohammad Saiful Islam, peon of Infectious Diseases (IDH), Ahmed Ali and Hospital Forhad Halim were the other accused.

The complainant in the petition said the accused cops in connivance with the other five took the bribe in two terms. He said the government made an

attempt to evict the slum dwellers who were living in Sattala Basti for long, on June 22, 2003. The High Court (HC) issued a

status quo on the eviction attempt following a writ petition filed by the slum dwellers, he added. The status quo order will remain valid until sposal of rule. However, Gulshan police on

January 8 and 14 raided the slum twice and beat up the men and sexually harassed women, Rabbani said. The police also arrested 300 people but released half of them after taking Tk 10 lakh in bribe, he added.

He said the police sent 150 slum dwellers to a court implicating them in false cases. He alleged the police took Tk 3 lakh from them for the favour of placing them under a section of the Dhaka Metropolitan Ordinance (DMP)

decided to upgrade the privileges of

the lawmakers and formed the sub-

committee to make a draft for a law

to that effect. Yesterday's meeting

held at the Jativa Sangsad Bhaban

was the first meeting of the sub-

and Chief Whip Khandakar Delwar

Hossain told The Daily Star that they

have only started to discuss the

issues. He however declined to

BNP lawmaker Mizanur Rahman

affairs adviser Salauddin Quader

Chowdhury attended the meeting

as a representative of the prime

Minu was present at the meeting.

Sub-committee member and

Prime Minister's parliamentary

Convenor of the sub-committee

"The concerned judge was bewildered at the behaviour on the part of the members of a disciplined service on duty." reads the court order served on traffic DC on March

Warrant No. 6403/04.

"If there was existence of such a case, it could have been served in the usual course as the car in which the udge was travelling is a government vehicle but the traffic police have no authority whatsoever to direct a judge on the way to court to stop his car and serve the papers upon him personally by detaining him on the roadside. "The acts on the part of the

persons involved in the incident are contemptuous, inasmuch as, such acts tantamount to undermining the honour and dignity of a judge of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh," the order continued.

Appearing before the court yesterday, traffic DC Pathan sought apology for the incident but said that he on-duty traffic policemen acted in accordance with the directions of the CMM

Barrister MA Samad, counsel for the DC traffic, told The Daily Star ast night that the court exempted his client from any charge in this connection.

Additional Attorney General Abdur Rezzak Khan and Deputy Attorney General Alal moved for the state

Finance probe BB FROM PAGE 16

Finance Secretary Zakir Ahmed Khan yesterday sought one month's time from the committee for submitting a report on the allegation, sources said.

The CAG report said the central bank in FY 1997-98 fixed salary structure and gave time scale to its staff through wrong explanation of the government order and thus made an additional payment of Tk 3.20 crore

Spending the amount should be considered as a loss of public money, the report added.

The central bank, however, in its reply to the CAG office said it had fixed salary structure and time scale in line with the decision of the bank's board of directors.

The parliamentary committee Chairman Harun Al Rashid said at the meeting that no government organisation is beyond accountabilty, especially in case of spending nublic money

The committee also started looking into several audit objections against Bangladesh Railway and Sadharan Bima Corporation.

However, due to busy schedule of the secretaries to the three ministries concerned, the committee postponed detailed discussion on the issues for the next meeting.

Barrister Amir-UI Islam proposed formation of a team of 10 ombudsmen in line with the constitutional provision and said the team will not only conduct the general election but also act as watchdog for all time. He said the extension of retire-

ment age of judges has damaged the integrity of the judiciary as "many are now calculating when he or she will become head of the caretaker government.

Mujahidul Islam Selim, general secretary of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), supported the idea of caretaker government reform and called for a united movement of political parties to realise the reform demands.

He placed a number of reform proposals that included prohibiting loan defaulters and fundamentalist parties from contesting the national elections

Fiscal comfort

FROM PAGE 1

which accounts for 1 percent of the GDP. This has only one meaning the tax-GDP ratio will decline and go off the government's PRSP target.

The other strain that will develop in the economy is in the budget deficit. Traditionally, budget deficit undershoots at the end of the year, which means the actual deficit is less than targeted. However, with a dismal revenue situation and expenditure overshoot in the first six months, it will be hard to expect such a saving grace.

The current expenditure in the first two quarters of FY05 totalling Tk 121 billion shows a runaway 22 percent increase from last fiscal's same quarters mainly because of flood-induced spending. More expenditure shocks are on way as the government plans partial implementation of the pay commission report in January. And a rise in savings certificate interest rate is on cards. The other cushion that the economy used to have in lower ADF expenditure will also not be there This means the budget deficit will remain almost stagnant at 4.7 percent of the GDP, as targeted in the PRSP.

But these developments will unfold another major challenge -- to rein in domestic financing to the target of 1.9 percent of GDP. This can be achieved only if external financing assumption of 2.4 percent of GDP can be maintained as

Mohiuddin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The main opposition Awami League has nominated Chittagong Čity Corporation (CCC) Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury to retain his post in the upcoming CCC election. An extended meeting of the

Executive Council of the AL Chittagong city, north and south units nominated Mohiuddin on Sunday evening. Chaired by Chittagong city AL

President and former minister MA Mannan, the meeting at Muslim Institute auditorium unanimously nominated Mohiuddin, also general secretary of city unit AL

He was elected CCC mayor in the 1994 and 2000 elections as a candidate of Chittagong Nagorik Committee. He will contest the next election as an AL candidate for the first time.

agreed in the Poverty Reduction

Growth Facility (PRGF) of the IMF. However, when this externa financing framework was agreed upon, it was thought that two PRGF tranches of \$70 million each would be available in January and June. Both of them remain uncertain now because of non-fulfilment of a number of major conditions. Disbursement under the World Bank's Development Support Credit III is still not in sight.

These mean the government will have to take recourse to domestic

More worrying is the develop-ment in the external sector with exports dipping rapidly. When the fiscal year began, exports had a 28 percent growth, which has now gone down to a piffling 10.5 percent. This coupled with fiscal overrun will ultimately put strains on foreign exchange reserves now just around \$3 billion

Ammo haul FROM PAGE 1

led by Hasinur Rahman raided a remote area of Naikkhongchhari and seized the arms that were found abandoned.

However, none was arrested in this connection.

Some ner le are t confusion about the demands for reforms in the caretaker government and the Election Commission. the constitution expert said, adding, "We should be aware of them."

"This person (Moudud) had also termed the interim government of 1990 unconstitutional just a day before the then acting president Shahabuddin Ahmed took charge.'

"At that time, the present day law minister was the vice president and asked why an interim government was necessary when a vice president existed in the country," he said.

Detective

FROM PAGE 16 Galib on February 23

Following the decision to form a high powered detective committee at yesterday's law and order committee meeting, State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar directed the police to conduct blockraids at different hotels and slums in the capital to nab hiding criminals,

BDNEWS adds. The minister also directed the officials concerned to take steps for quick disposal of the cases pending for over five to six months

"Police are hunting for Bangla Bhai." the minister said

Police and officials of Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) will conduct joint drives to nab the drug peddlers in the city, he added

The meeting decided that more than 72 new vehicles will be imported for patrolling the highways to curb robbery and snatching in export processing zones.

Babar said the overall law and order situation across the country has improved during the last six months

corruption and unmasking different criminal groups since 1992.

This incurred the wrath of the criminals and their godfathers against the daily, the journalists said. They added that a quarter has been harassing the editor and others by accusing them of false criminal charges one after another.

Criminals on March 4 beat up Oasif Bari Chowdhury Lekhon, the editor's son, allegedly after failing to abduct him.

Police had arrested a number of people but three of them obtained bail within 48 hours and continued threatening the editor

Maoists rebels in turn "The law has forbidden the assured political parties of their political parties to hold street prosupport in organizing protests tests and they were not permitted to stage such protests," Home Ministry against the king.

end to the uprising.

Nepal parties take

"We urge all the political parties to create a new basis for reestablishment of democracy by forgetting past differences,' Prachanda said Sunday.

The Maoists held a nationwide 14-day transport blockade shortly after the king assumed power which sent food prices soaring as supplies dried up.

Earlier Monday, Maoist rebels The blockade was enforced torched four buses to enforce a new transport blockade until the end of mainly through fear of rebel reprisals rather than through violence. The buses were set ablaze at However police said a bus driver Itahari, 540 kilometers (337 miles) was killed and nine passengers hurt southeast of the capital Kathmandu, according to a spokesman for the when rebels opened fire on a bus on Eastern Nepal Transport a road patrolled by the security

forces during the blockade. Gyanendra's takeover has been

condemned internationally, including by Nepal's powerful southern neighbor India which along with Britain has cutoff military supplies.

Maoist rebels have called for a nationwide general strike between April 2 and April 12 to mark the 15th anniversary of the movement in Nepal.

UN inspects army

FROM PAGE 16 Africa and Australia

During the visit, the UN officials will visit Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training (Bipsot), Central Workshop in Gazipur, Kholahati cantonment in Syedpur and Riverine Unit Equipment in Chittagong.

Besides, they will hold meeting with the army high-ups at Bangladesh Army headquarters.

"It's a routine work. Such inspection is carried out before any major deployment of United Nations peacekeepers," a senior army official on condition of anonymity

told The Daily Star yesterday. A source in the army said Bangladesh Army has almost completed its preparations for sending troops to Sudan under the authority of the UN. He said the UN Security Council however has vet to pass the resolution allowing peace-

keepers deployment in Sudan The number of troops to be sent

and the areas they will be stationed at will be confirmed once the resolution is passed," said the senior officer adding that the number would be around 1600.

Earlier Bangladesh Army has got the commanding post of peacekeepers in Sudan. Major General Fazle Elahi Akbar, who had been appointed the force commander, is

now in Sudan. Currently, 7,816 members of Bangladesh Army are serving in 12 UN peacekeeping missions in different countries. Besides, the air force and the navy are also participating in the peacekeeping operations.

In last 16 years, Bangladesh earned Tk 4,600 crore by contributing 40,793 soldiers -- nearly half the total troops in Bangladesh Army -- to 31 UN peacekeeping missions.

borrowing, upsetting the target of 1.9 percent of GDP.

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