NEWS

violence

said

(FIU).

extremist alternatives, already

offering an attractive breeding

ground for political and sectarian

and a stalemated political process

could further contribute to the type

of instability and widespread frustra-

tion that has elsewhere provided

recruits, support, and safe haven for

international terrorist groups," it

was an increase in political vio-

lence" using explosives in 2004. In

May, the British high commissioner

and more than 70 others were

injured in a grenade attack in Sylhet.

In August, approximately 20 Awami

League supporters were killed, and

200 injured during an attack on the

technical assistance, is strengthen-

ing police institutions with a

professionalisation programme.

enhancing police and banking

capabilities to combat terrorist

financing, and strengthening border

control systems to detect suspicious

travel and improve the integrity of

Bangladesh in developing new

stronger laws to enhance banking

oversight and enforcement and in

creating a financial intelligence unit

Appreciating the government, it

said the government is committed to

enforcing UN Security Council

resolutions and actions related to

terrorism, including the identifica-

tion and freezing of assets of individ-

uals and organisations designated

as terrorists or terrorist supporters.

such as the Saudi-based charity al-

"It also ordered the closure of the

local Rabita Trust office and the

departure from Bangladesh of its

expatriate staff. The Bangladesh

military maintains a large presence

in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, and

Haramain Foundation.

The United States is assisting

Bangladeshi travel documents.

It said Bangladesh, with US

party's rally in Dhaka.

The report mentioned that "there

"Endemic corruption, poverty,

Mohammad Ali

Hassan Ariff, who resigned apparently over disagreements with the government on several issues, attended his last day in the office yesterday.

Meanwhile, a group of government law officers after Ariff's resignation demanded removal of a few law officers identifying them as "followers of Ariff."

Branding attorney general Ariff a failure, the law officers yesterday demanded ouster of officers who were appointed during the last Awami League regime, accusing them of corruption, nepotism and irregularities.

The demands came from a meeting at the attorney general's office vesterday with Assistant Attorney General Waliur Rahman in the chair. Some 20 out of more than 60 law officers attended the meet-

The meeting noted that Ariff did not resign on health grounds -rather the prime minister asked him to guit as in the last three years he miserably failed to run his office.

The hour-long meeting held before the formal appointment of Mohammad Ali, urged the government to appoint an attorney general who will be loyal to the ruling alliance.

"We are relieved to see his resignation. We were in a terrible state for the last three years as Ariff has tarnished the image of the government. We hail the government for the right decision." Deputy Attorney General Golam Kibria told the meeting.

"The deputy attorneys general (DAG) and assistant attorneys general (AAG) who were appointed during the Awami League regime should be ousted," Kibria demanded. "Otherwise they will pass on all important records of the attorney general's office to others

and tarnish the image of the government." of Faizee on the grounds of provid-DAG Golam Mohammad

Faizee

FROM PAGE 1

resignation!"

save vou.'

bench.

cancelled the enrolment certificate

exam results during enrolment.

allow Faizee to sit on any bench.

programme from the sit-in.

SCBA will announce its next

Alam at the rally said, "On April 24

the Bar Council at a meeting

cancelled your (Faizee's) certificate

But at that time the attorney general

(who was the ex-officio chairman of

the Council) and Advocate Sheikh

Razzak Ali (a pro-government

lawyer and Council member) did not

come to save you. This cancellation

This government will not be able to

said. "Do not lower your image by

saving a judge. For the sake of

saving the image of the judiciary,

refrain from designating Faizee any

Police on Friday arrested Ramzan

an accused in the Dhaka City

Dhaka Medical College and

Hospital sources, however, said

three fingers of Ramzan's one hand

were severed and his right thigh

bore a stab mark. The leg also had

Mirpur police said they took

Ramzan to Garan Chatbari to nab

his associates, who opened fire on

the law-enforcers, and he died there

in 'crossfire' at around 2:00am

blank shotgun firing, they added.

Pointing at the chief justice, Alam

has been a unanimous decision.

SCBA President Mahbubey

Chowdhury at the meeting said, "Ariff played the role of a stepmother. We could not meet him easily while some other officers surrounded him."

He alleged that half the law officers are tilted to the main opposition Awami League. "They are now trying to change their shells. In the last three years, the attorney general's office was dominated by some leftist law officers," he added.

Pointing finger at the press, Golam Mohammad said, "Newspapers are running one-sided reports suppressing the facts. We shall protest if they misreport on today's ieetina.

AAG Rejaul Karim said an investigation should be launched against a law officer who is involved in human rights organisation Odhikar. Without mentioning the officer's name Karim said, "He is making the vernment controversial." AAG Giasuddin Mithu noted,

'The four-party alliance government had made a mistake by not appointing an attorney general loyal to itself, and appointing someone who did not work for the government." Giasuddin urged the government

to appoint barrister Abdur Razzak the attorney general. Razzak is wellknown as a pro-Jamaat intellectual. PROFILE OF MOHAMMAD ALI

Newly appointed Attorney General AJ Mohammad Ali is a long-serving lawver in the Supreme Court. He was enrolled to practise in the High Court in 1980 and in the Appellate Division in 1985.

Son of Bangladesh's first attorney general MH Khandakar, AJ Mohammad Ali was appointed additional attorney general on October 23, 2001.

May Day today

Bangladesh Bar Council in an unprecedented move Sunday

globe, including Bangladesh, with a fresh vow to institutionalise workers' ing false information about his LLB rights

May Day commemorates the More than 100 lawyers led by killing by police on May 1, 1886 of SCBA leaders took out the processeveral demonstrating workers at sion at around 1:00pm chanting, Hay Market in Chicago, USA, who "We have one demand, Faizee's demanded that the 12-hour workday be reduced to eight hours.

Later, they staged a rally where Today is a public holiday. The the speakers urged Faizee once state-run Bangladesh Television again to resign and Chief Justice and Bangladesh Betar will broad-Sved JR Mudassir Husain not to cast special programmes while national dailies are bringing out Otherwise, the agitating SCBA special supplements on this occamembers on Tuesday will stage the sion sit-in from 8:30am to 10:15 am. The

Sramik Nirapatta Forum, a consortium of workers' rights organisations, used the occasion to place a 9-point demand for the compensation and rehabilitation of the workers killed and injured in the collapse of Spectrum Sweater Industries Ltd. building at Savar.

President Prof Jajuddin Ahmed Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Opposition Leader in Parliament Sheikh Hasina delivered separate messages on the eve of May Day. urging the people to observe the day by showing proper respect to the noble sacrifice of the May Day martyrs.

In her message, the Prime Minister called upon all to enhance the relationship between workers and owners in order to achieve economic freedom for the country.

JS body okays

Development Bank in 1973?" "After the passage of the bill. an individual if affected can sue the World Bank, though the government cannot do so," the chairman told reporters after the meeting held at

the Jatiya Sangsad (JS) Bhaban. Committee member and AL lawmaker Sayadul Haque, however, told journalists after the walkout that the bill, once passed, would

put the World Bank above the law. Police however disputed the "Nobody will be allowed to file lawsuit against the World Bank which is against the spirit of the constitution," he maintained.

The bill was placed in parliament on October 31 last year amid widespread criticism by the opposition political parties, civil society, and rights groups.

The bill, styled The International Financial Organisations (Amendment) Act, 2005, proposes incorporating two new articles into The International Financial Organisations Order, 1972 (Presidential Order No 86 of 1972).

"The Bank shall enjoy immunity from every form of legal process, Police seized a gun and a except in cases arising out of or in connection with the exercise of its powers to borrow money, to guarantee obligations, or to buy and sell or underwrite the sale of securities, in which cases, actions may be brought against the Bank in a court of competent jurisdiction...," proses the hill

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Huq Inu and General Secretary Syed Zafar Sazzad said the cycle of civilisation, progress and humanity will not run unless the just rights of the workers are real-

AL President Sheikh Hasina said

the closure of government indus-

tries and failure to pay wages on

time have created widespread

unemployment in the country and

contributed to the inhuman life of

In a joint May Day statement,

workers.

ised Jatiya Party Chairman Anwar Hossain Manju and Secretary General Sheikh Shahidul Islam in a joint statement said there is no on March 28 issued a rule upon the alternative to recognizing the just government to show cause within 10 rights of workers, who are the prime drivers of production in the age of granted bail. science and technology.

Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh and Islami Oikya Jote will hold discussions and rallies in the city.

Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik Jote Bangladesh Trade Union Kendro Swadhin Bangla Garments Sramik Karmochari Federation Bangladesh Apparels Workers Federation, Bangladesh Garments Workers Unity Council, Jatiya Sramik Jote-Bangladesh Bangladesh Sramaiibi Kendro Jativa Mukti Council. Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Mukti Andolon will

hold rallies, seminars and discus-

sions at different parts in the city.

different political parties have been protesting the move to grant the Bank immunity since the bill was

> introduced in the parliament. Late AL lawmaker and former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria vehemently opposed the bill minutes before it was placed. "The bill is very much objectionable ... It is

illogical and it has no morality... determined bilaterally, between the There is no need to place such a two countries, and a full understand bill in the parliament," he told the ing and appreciation for the inter-House. ests and desires and views of that

Finance and Planning Minister M country. Saifur Rahman, who piloted the bill. promptly responded to his predecessor's observations. "It is true that there is no such instance of giving immunity to the World Bank. But it is also true that there is no incident of Washington and New Delhi are issuing fatwa or filing of cases interested in deciding about the against the World Bank, except in future course of relations in Bangladesh."

The minister said the ADB, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (Ifad), and the Food when we're talking about regional -and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) enjoy such immunity. On the day the bill was placed

before the House, WB Country Director Christine I Wallich told the BBC radio that Bangladesh was the only country where the move to give immunity to the Bank had been questioned. She dismissed the notion that immunity will hinder aood aovernance. Critics, however, point out that

the Articles of Agreement the Bank

Ex-Ingilab TV MD US lists Harkatul FROM PAGE 16 Judge Mohammad Shamsul Alam

Khan of the First Additional FROM PAGE 1 Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court,

Dhaka granted Shoib bail upon a bond

of Tk one lakh with four guarantors.

been suffering from eye diseases.

against him were primarily proved.

religious sentiments of Muslims.

higher court on the same issue

case after the investigation.

ent fax and e-mail messages seized

passed sensitive information out of the

Tk 12 crore from Jews in Israel was

also seized from him. The fund was

sought to publish three dailies -- the

Dainik Sonali Din. Dainik Rupantar,

Dainik Paribartan -- the complaint

direction of those relations are

The questioner mentioned the

visit of a senior State Department

official to India and quoted reports of

some influential newspapers in

India quoting the official, saying that

Clarifying that comment, Ereli

said. "That's not inconsistent with

should not mistake that for a substi-

tute or alternative to direct engage-

Chowdhury as mayoral candidate

accused the Chittagong police admin-

police administration, advocate

Ranadas Gupta, co-chairman of the

Nagarik Committee, said free and fair

election is not possible until the police

administration stops harassing the

country, stated the complaint.

Washington

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh.

ment bilaterally.

FROM PAGE 16

Two CMP

candidate, they alleged

opposition activists.

row.

OC in his complaint.

24 läst year.

The prosecution then also

Meanwhile, a High Court Division

opposed the bail petition, saying

Shoib's activities had offended the

various factors and its long practice of moderate Islam is increasingly under threat from extremists.

In the bail order, the court said the The report mentioned the HUJIprosecution had been delaying the B's leader as Shauqat Osman, process of starting the trial and that the mostly unheard, and its suspected documents submitted in support of framing charges against Shoib were involvement in an attempt on Sheikh not sufficient. Moreover. Shoib has Hasina and explosions at cultural programmes as well as its affiliation Earlier, on April 2 the same court with Pakistani militant groups who rejected the bail petition of the all maintain contacts with al-Qaeda. accused, saying the charges brought

"The mission of HUJI-B, led by Shauqat Osman, is to establish Islamic rule in Bangladesh. HUJI-B has connections with Pakistani militant groups Harakat ul-

Jihad-I-Islami (HUJI) and Harakat ul-Mujahidin (HUM), which advocate similar objectives in days as to why Shoib would not be Pakistan and Jammu and Kashmir," said the US report.

As per law, no lower court can pass "These groups all maintain any order if any rule is pending with the contacts with the al-Qaeda network in Afghanistan. The leaders of HUJI-Mohammad Abdul Hanif, officer-in-B and HUM both signed the charge (OC) of the Airport Police February 1998 fatwa sponsored by Station, filed a sedition case against Usama bin Ladin that declared Shoib with the Chief Metropolitan American civilians to be legitimate Magistrate's Court, Dhaka on January targets for attack," it pointed out.

Metropolitan Magistrate About HUJI-B's activities, the Mohammad Emdadul Haque directed report said: "HUJI-B was suspected the airport police to register a regular in the assassination attempt in July 2000 of (then) Bangladeshi Prime Shoib was arrested from Zia Minister Sheikh Hasina. The group International Airport on November 29, may also have been responsible for 2003 for his alleged links with Mossad indiscriminate attacks using improthe Israeli intelligence agency, said the vised explosive devices at cultural gatherings in Dhaka in January and Shoib was supposed to present a April 2001." naper at a Tel Aviv seminar and differ-

The strength of the group was mentioned "unknown" and added from his possession proved that he that "some estimates of HUJI-B cadre strength suggest several A project profile seeking a fund of thousand members.

"The group operates and trains members in Bangladesh, where it maintains at least six camps... Funding of the HUJI-B comes primarily from madrassas in Bangladesh. The group also has ties with militants in Pakistan that may provide another funding source," it said.

The report said Bangladesh supports the global war on terror but its ability to combat terrorism is undermined by weak institutions, porous borders, limited law enforcement capabilities, and debilitating in-fighting between the two major political parties.

It also said Bangladesh's long tradition of moderate Islamic nation is increasingly under threat from

has been successful in locating hidden weapons. In April it seized a large cache of weapons in Chittagong.' "Bangladesh is taking steps to mprove its effectiveness in preventing maritime smuggling and its capabilities in terrorist interdiction operations," it said

Kibria killing case

ROM PAGE 1

when you're talking with regional statement given earlier under actors about events in the region. section 164 of the Criminal obviously other countries may come Procedure Code (CrPC). up as a topic for discussion. But one

The court also rejected complainant Advocate Abdul Majid Khan's prayer for further investigations into the case. In his petition the district Awami League (AL) organising secretary had stated the necessity of further investigation into the origin of the grenades, nonrecording of Abdul Qaiyum's statement under section 164, non-

Abdul Qaivum had planned to kill Kibria with an ulterior motive of securing victory in the next parliamentary polls and held several secret meetings with his followers before the killing. In accordance with the plan. Jalal collected grenade from Qaiyum and handed it over to Momin before the Baidderbazar AL rally.

When SAMS Kibria was leaving the area after attending the public meeting on the night of 27 January on Baidderbazar Primary Schoo premises, Momin threw the grenade

aiming at Kibria, the charge sheet

added. The attack killed five per-

sons including Kibria and injured 50

The investigation officer of the

murder case Assistant

Superintendent of Police (ASP)

Munshi Atiqur Rahman of the

Criminal Investigation Department

(CID) submitted charge sheet

against the 10 persons on 20 March.

Nineteen persons were made

witnesses in the charge sheet while

123 persons were guizzed during

to the Special Tribunal-I of Habigani

for acceptance for another case

started under the explosives act in

connection with the same incident.

Hearing in that case will be held

"It is a positive move. But all

political detainees must be released

and the King should restore democ-

racy, hold talks with political parties

and activate the constitutional

process," said Gopal Man Shrestha.

acting head of Deuba's Congress

Communist Party of Nepal (UML),

the biggest member of the multi-

party government sacked by

Gyanendra said he would watch the

government for a week before

making a comment. "I can't take the

"With the end of emergency rule

all the fundamental rights should

deem to have been restored in

theory and practice, said Yubaraj

Ghimire, editor of the Nepali weekly

"But whether they have been

restored or not depends on the

behaviour of the state. There are still

some areas of confusion over the

"If the (royal) commission contin-

ues to behave as a terror organ of

the state, lifting the emergency will

powers the King has retained.

King by his words." he said.

Samav.

Pradip Nepal, a leader of the

(Democratic) party.

The charge sheet was also sent

the investigation.

others

Corporation ward commissioner Saidur Rahman Newton murder case, from Munshiganj Shahida alleged a police subinspector had demanded Tk 3 lakh for his son's release and threatened to kill Ramzan in 'crossfire' if they failed to give the sum.

FROM PAGE 1

FROM PAGE 1

many changes or too much extra pressured on the current budget. As Finance and Planning Minister Saifur Rahman is scheduled to go

New pay scale

abroad tomorrow for 12 days, a source said, it is unlikely that any cabinet decision on a new pay scale would come before his return.

During this trip, Saifur will meet executives of The World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Washington. The multilateral donors who earlier had expressed reservations about too high a pay hike and advised the government to keep the additional monetary requirement for implementing a new scale within Tk

4,000 crore Sources hinted at that Saifur probably wants to make sure of the attitude of WB and IMF in this regard, as he himself told yesterday's cabinet meeting to wait and give him more time to study further before making a final choice

The five-member secretary-level committee headed by Cabinet Secretary Dr Sadaat Hossain vesterday proposed four alternative pay structures with the highest requiring Tk 5,213 crore additional money and the lowest Tk 3975 crore. The midrange proposed scales will require Tk 4,541 crore and Tk 4,286 crore. The committee in its proposa noted that in view of government employees' expectations, resource constraints and living cost, implementing the second highest proposed scale with Tk 2,500 basic pay at the lowest and Tk 24,000 at the highest end is the most logical option. The highest proposed pay scale designates Tk 2,600 at the lowest and Tk 25.000 at the highest end. The third highest pay scale requires Tk 4,286 crore extra money to implement with the lowest basic pay at Tk 2,450 and the highest at Tk 23,500. And the lowest pay scale proposed has the lowest basic at Tk 2.400 and the highest at Tk 23.000. If the government chooses the pay scale recommended by the

secretary-committee, it would mean a 60 percent salary hike at the highest and 70 percent at the lowest end from the existing scale. Then the ratio

would be 1:9.60. dations unchanged, it would need an

ary allocations. The current budget has earmarked Tk 13,477 crore in salaries for the government staffs.

Mobile phone virus spreads

allegations, saying Ramzan, chargesheeted accused in four murder cases, was killed in of the lowest and the highest salary 'crossfire' with his accomplices.

The sixth Pay Commission for state employees however had recommended 83 percent hike at the highest level and 86 percent at the lowest. If the government had gone bullet wounds caused by pointfor implementing those recommen-

additional Tk 6,712 crore in budget-

The new scale is supposed to take a retrospective effect from January this year.

Kushtia Ifarmal alias Ifa. 36. a BCP cadre. was killed when police and his accomplices locked in an armed

encounter at Amla village in Mirpur upazila, reports our Kushtia correspondent.

evolver with 11 bullets.

vesterday.

4:00am.

died in 'crossfire'.

BGMEA

Committee on Safety Measures.

given through the Commissioner of

requested to bring a certified copy

from their respective Union

Parishad chairman as eligible heirs

of the dead workers, he told the

to submit their required papers

immediately for getting the compen-

'This is a very positive development

and we welcome it," Foreign

Secretary Hemayetuddin told

gency by the Nepalese monarch.

peace and stability in South Asia."

had imposed after seizing power in

February by firing the government,

and assuming absolute powers

come up at the foreign secretary-

It was learn that India proposed

Asked about dates for the stalled

Saarc summit, Hemayet said

Pakistan continued consultation

with the Saarc capitals to find a set

the talks between June 5 and June

Asked about Indo-Bangladesh

suspending civil liberties.

first week of June.

suitable schedule.

the foreign secretary said.

level talks

Dhaka hails

He, however, urged the relatives

he Labour Court," he added.

nal charges.

FROM PAGE 16

news agency.

FROM PAGE 16

sation.

Former SCBA president and senior Advocate Abdul Baset Maiumder said. "Faizee is still a judge with a fake certificate. The resignation phase has just started. The attorney general has resigned. There will be more resignations." FROM PAGE 1 2 'criminals' such immunity to the Asian

Visitors' entry FROM PAGE 16

Development Project at the PMO.

Talking to the news agency Project Director Engineer Mahbub Sarwar said the online access control system is now in trial operation.

He said the data-based mechanised method is easy to use which can be accessed from anywhere within the PMO as well as good reporting and monitoring system.

Competent officials can now issue an entry pass from their personal computer as online personal computers have been set up at the gates of the PMO, where names of the officers requesting a pass and particulars of the visitors will be displayed

Ahmadiyya issue

FROM PAGE 1

withdrawal of the case filed against two IKNMB central leaders in Satkhira.

IKNMB leaders vowed to go for movement until death if their de nands are not met within a week.

Gas explosion FROM PAGE 16 a critical condition.

The reason for the explosion could not be known immediately Police rushed to the spot and cordoned off the factory

They asked the local people to move to a safer place to avoid emission of ammonia gas.

to 20 countries

AFP, Helsinki

A virus that spreads from cell phone to cell phone has made its way to 20 different countries around the world. a Finnish anti-virus expert said on Friday

"The Cabir virus has now been detected in 20 different countries... including in the US, China and Russia... We found the virus in Luxembourg two days ago and in the Netherlands two weeks ago," said Mikko Hyppoenen, head of anti-virus research at Finnish Internet security firm F-Secure.

The virus, which was first discovered last June, spreads only over bluetooth, a short-range radio technology for Internet and mobile devices.

"Once you have one infected phone it will try to beam itself to other compatible phones. This virus is only traveling when people travel the world," Hyppoenen pointed out. The virus does not spread easily

however, since the recipient has to first accept a request for his or her phone to connect with a nearby phone, then accept to download a file from that phone, amidst warn ings that the file could be infected.

Cabinet okays energy accord with China

UNB, Dhaka

The cabinet vesterday approved a proposal giving effect to an agreement signed between Bangladesh and China on peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia presided over the weekly meeting of the cabinet in the cabinet conference room at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in the evening. The meeting directed the minis-

tries and departments concerned to 'immediately implement' the unimplemented decisions of the cabinet meetings.

The meeting discussed a report on implementation of the cabinet cisions

Cabinet ministers and state ministers in charge of different ministries attended the meeting

Mirpur police said they arrested

"...No action shall be brought If a from Amla when he was holding a against the Bank, by any agency, or meeting with other outlaws at about by any entity or person directly or They said the outlaws attacked indirectly acting for or deriving claims from any agency or entity or the police to snatch Ifa away but the person, and there shall be recourse police countered the attack and Ifa to such special procedures for the settlement of controversies He was a convict in a murder between the Bank and the governcase and accused of 10 other crimiment or the agency or entity or person as the case may be," it adds. It goes on: "Property and assets

of the Bank shall, wheresoever located and by whomsoever held. be immune from all forms of seizure 'The remaining Tk 21,000 would be attachment or execution, before the delivery of final judgement against the Bank.' Eligible beneficiaries are

Apart from the stiff opposition by the left-leaning political parties and human-rights bodies outside parliament, the Awami League (AL) and

PDB accepts

"But we are not sure if the old plants can at all be rehabilitated with these rusted machinery. It is likely that the money will be wasted," said one source.

reporters about the lifting of emer-The PDB however accepted the equipment following an inde-He said, " We welcome any pendent review by some experts development that will contribute to from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, who Nepalese King Gyanendra reported the equipment are okay. yesterday lifted the emergency he

"The TPE has also agreed to provide 18 months' warranty for the equipment," said a PDB official. "We will seek the power ministry's approval in a few days to make the contract effective.

oreign secretary-level meeting, A business lobby has been Hemayet said Dhaka would be putting pressure on the PDB for responding to the Indian proposal to years to make the payment to the hold the meeting in New Delhi in the TPE. The Russian embassy in Dhaka also sent letters asking the He said all bilateral issues will government to make the TPE contract effective.

The PDB signed the rehabilitation contract, bypassing the Economic Relations Division (ERD), under suppliers' credit scheme in May 31, 2000. Each of the two Ghorashal units produces 55 megawatt power.

An annoyed ERD opposed the of dates convenient to all. As host Bangladesh is also working for a contract signing. An interministerial probe was launched and the contract was suspended "We are committed to the Saarc for some time. and we want early convening of the summit at dates convenient to all,

The suspension was later withdrawn. But the contract could

signs with every member country candidate

already provide the Bank with adequate immunity from legal process.

The Bank formally asked the government for legal immunity about three and a half years ago, after it was sued by its discharged staff member Ismet Zerin Khan The aovernment subsequently sought legal opinion from the attorney general and the law ministry. Two former attorneys general, Mahmudul Islam and AF Hassan Ariff, said in their opinions that as a body, the World Bank is not eligible for immunity under the existing legal

provisions. Late Barrister Sved Ishtiag Ahmed gave a similar opinion when he was adviser to the law ministry in the caretaker government of 2001.

not be made effective as the Russian company declined payment of 10 per cent of the total project cost within 45 days of the contract signing, as provided for

in the contract. The finance ministry is also supposed to issue a letter of guarantee to the TPE so that it submits its bank guarantee to the PDB to make the contract effective. But considering the company's failure to complete construction of the Siddhirganj plant

timely, the finance ministry did not issue any guarantee letter. Against this backdrop, the TPE tried to impose the project on the government by unilaterally importing 1,400 tonnes of power plant equipment in April 2001. Despite the efforts of some PDB officials, the equipment were not

accepted as they did not have builder's guarantee. When the BNP-led coalition came to power, the Bureau of Anti-Corruption started investigating the deal. The probe however was suspended apparently without any reasons.

In 1995, the TPE signed the contract to set up the 210 mw Siddhirganj power plant in three years but took 10 years to complete the task

istration of favouring the ruling alliance ecording of the state AL leaders present in the 27 Sources said the Nagarik January meeting at Baidderbazar, Committee representatives cometc

plained to the EC that the police were Habiganj district BNP's expelled harassing the opposition activists in different parts of the city. The CMP vice president AKM Abdul Qaivum commissioner is often found in the vehicle of Mir Mohammad Nasir has been named as prime accused in the case. The other accused are Uddin, the state minister for civil Lashkarpur union president of the aviation and tourism and ruling party Shahid Zia Smriti Gobeshana Parishad Zainal Abedin Momin, The EC heard both sides and Habiganj district general secretary decided to deliver judgement tomorof the Parishad Shahed Ali. Lashkarpur union BNP President "We have completed the hearing Jamir Áli, BNP activists Zainal We will review the documents submit-Abedin Jalal and Tajul Islam, BNP ted by the Nagarik Committee in favour of their allegations," Election supporter Ayat Ali, assistant office Commissioner AK Mohammad Ali told secretary of the district Jativatabadi The Daily Star after the hearing. Questioning the role of the local

Chhatra Dal Selim Miah, Muhibur Rahman and Kaial Miah. The last two have been absconding since the incident.

The charge sheet stated that tomorrow

Nepal King

returned from his first foreign tour since February 1, aimed at shoring up international support, a visit during which he convinced India to resume military aid.

He had reassured India and the United States, another major supporter, that he would restore democ-

Upon his arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport the King said that during talks with Heads of States and Heads of Governments. he explained to them that "Nepal had given priority to the fight against terrorism and the Nepalese people's aspiration for restoring peace", according to Radio Nepal.

The King added that he was nfluenced by his meeting with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at the Asian-African Summit.

"I have taken the views expressed by Mr Singh seriously", the King told reporters at the airport. In his proclamation, Gyanendra

said he would continue the newly established Royal Commission for Corruption Control, set up after February 1 with sweeping powers to arrest, investigate and prosecute politicians and bureaucrats.

not help much in Nepal's journey back to democracy. The panel arrested ousted Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba after he refused its summons, rejecting it as unconstitutional.

Political leaders were cautious on Saturday

Constitutional law expert Srihari Aryal said little changed. "It is still the King's direct rule," he

told Reuters. "There is fear in the minds of the people.'

the criminal activities. Tk 175 allowance FROM PAGE 16 HOUSE RENT-CUT OF DIPLOMATS

Meanwhile, BDNEWS reports Saifur Rahman yesterday directed the foreign ministry to reduce the house rent of Bangladeshi diplo-mats abroad.

The diplomats take huge amount of money as their house rents, the finance minister said at a briefind following a meeting with the officials of the ministries of foreign, agricul-ture, water resources, LGRD, social welfare, women and children affairs, following and buildren affairs, fisheries and livestock, and power

"An ambassador takes \$2,000 as house rent; when another diplo mat is appointed replacing the previous one, he hikes up the rent to \$3,000," he was quoted as saying.

Saifur suggested to the foreign ministry that there should be a policy to make the matter rational and transparent

The CMP commissioner, however, admitted that he was compelled to get in the car of Mir Nasir after the announcement of the election sched-FROMPAGE 16 "An anonymous caller told me that life of the state minister had come under threat at a programme on the Chittagong Medical College premises

I rushed there and rescued him. Then the state minister asked me to get in his car. I just followed his direction as a government official," sources said quoting the CMP commissioner.

The CMP commissioner said the racy as soon as possible. police were not harassing any opposition activist. "We arrested some opposition activists in connection with