

POWER SECTOR WB for contracting out distribution management

UNB, Dhaka

AFP, Islamabad

Musharraf

parties,

year.

Experts from the World Bank vesterday advocated for contracting out the power sector's distribution management to improve its efficiency Speaking at a brain storming

session on the issue, the bank officials said appointment of private sector management team could

Indian Kashmiri separatist leaders

indicated yesterday they may abandon their 57-year stance on

holding a referendum in the divided

Himalayan region after meeting Pakistan President Pervez

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, an

umbrella group of some two dozen

emerge from outside a series of

decades-old United Nations resolu-

always backed the resolutions,

onwards as the only acceptable

path to end the bitter dispute over

the scenic territory. "It looks as if we are moving

towards a negotiated settlement

We have to move from our tradi-tional positions," Farooq told AFP

after a group of moderate separat-

ists met Musharraf late Tuesday.

which were adopted from 1948

Until now the separatists have

tions calling for a plebiscite.

said a solution could

improve the performance in the ailing power sector.

segment of the power sector as the most inefficient part of the sector that seriously impedes overall development of the entire power sector.

Officials of international private companies engaged in the manage ment of power distribution in differ-

Kashmiri rebels may

drop referendum call

ent African nations presented their experiences in the seminar. They identified the distribution The World Bank, Power Division

and Public-Private Infrastructure Advisory Facility jointly organised

the state-owned Power Development

Board (PDB) and Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) as they came out with some negative experiences in the power sector.

They said DESA and DESCO were created as per suggestion of the World Bank, but this step has failed to vield any major results in reducing system loss or improving

Addressing the seminar as chief guest, State Minister for Power Iqbal Hassan Mahmood said the government could go for hiring private management consultants for distri-

view shared by most major powers. The separatists, meanwhile, al want to split from India, with most seeking to join Pakistan and a

inority seeking full independence. Official media quoted Musharraf as saying after the meeting that Pakistan would not accept the status quo in Kashmir and would continue its efforts to seek a solution line with the aspiration of the people of Kashmir

shortly afterwards, calling for a plebiscite in the whole of Kashmir,

which could lead to the state either

ioining Pakistan or India. There is no

lutions have become irrelevant a

India, however, insists the reso-

independence option.

We talked about different proposals. It was a very productive meeting," Hurriyat leader Farooq said without elaborating We agreed on two things, that

the status quo is unacceptable and the Line of Control cannot be made a permanent border. Indian leaders have ruled out any

The Hurrivat leaders are making redrawing of borders while Pakistar rejects making a permanent border an unprecedented visit to the Pakistani side of the border as part the existing ceasefire line in of a peace process launched Kashmir, known as the Line of between Pakistan and India last Control. However Musharraf has fre-

"We support the step by step quently said both sides would have strategy and we understand that a to show flexibility and courage and solution to the problem cannot be last year he put forth a set of options found in one go. We are very hopeincluding the demilitarization of ful after meeting with Musharraf." Kashmir is divided between parts of Kashmir. Pakistan Information Minister Pakistan and India and is claimed by Sheikh Rashid said Wednesday he

had applied for a permit to travel to both in full. It has caused two of the his ancestral home in Indian three wars between the nuclear-Kashmir on a new bus service, the armed neighbours since their independence from Britain in 1947 first visit of its kind by a senior Islamabad official At that time Kashmir was an Rashid, a native Kashmiri, said

independent state. But when Pakistani tribal rebels raided the he planned to be on the June 30 bus region, Kashmir's Hindu ruler hurfrom the Pakistani zone's capital riedly acceded to India. Muzaffarabad, the seventh since The UN resolutions were passed the service was launched on April 7.

Bidisha moved

courts late yesterday although the High Court had directed the govern-

ment to immediately transfer ailing Bidisha to the prison cell. A pale-looking Bidisha -- her

shut and face, swollen -- was carried to the docks about half an hour after she was taken to the court hajat at about 2:20pm in a white police van. She fainted in the docks, prompting women police to pour water on her to help her regain her senses. She was later given a chair to sit in the dock with the support of two female policemen. Court proceedings over, Bidisha was taken to Dhaka Central Jail at 4:20pm from where she was shifted to the BSMMUH at 6:05pm. Bidisha's domestic help Jesmin Sangma, arrested on Tuesday, was, meanwhile, remanded for two days vesterday after the police showed her arrested in the theft case. The police in their prayer for taking Sangma on a five-day remand said she knows everything about Bidisha's "criminal activities" **CONTEMPT CHARGE** Bidisha's lawyers yesterday said they would charge Dhaka jail authorities with contempt of court for refusing them a meeting with their client despite the High Court ordered full access of the lawyers to her during police remand or cus-"We went to the jail to meet said Barrister Sara Hossain, one of Bidisha's lawyers. "We sent a slip to the jailer thrice from the gate as we were barred from entering the jail for around two hours from 4:20pm, but he even did not bother to meet us, she said The lawyers were not allowed to see Bidisha at the prison cell, either. As the lawyers showed Deputy

government's dirty game "Bidisha deserves to be set free bail as she is seriously ill Moreover, she now has fainted twice in the dock," Bhuiyan told the

court.

the seminar titled "Contracting for Power Sector Performance Lessons from International

Experience" at a city hotel. However, such suggestion of the World Bank and other private companies could not impress the officials of

their performance. bution business as a test case for a

certain period to improve the performance of the sector. "But, unless the overall efficiency of the officials are improved, no major change will take place in the power sector....the officials have to

come up with positive outlook to run their organisations in a professional manner and with commercial view, he told the seminar. Power Division Secretary Nazrul

slam said the government has implemented a number of reform programmes to improve the performance of the power sector that reduced the system loss.

'Reform programmes are going on and many things are yet to be done to achieve the goal to have an efficient power sector," he added.

The seminar was addressed, among others, by PDB Chairman Khwaja Ghulam Ahmed, Director General of Power Cell BD Rahmanatullah, World Bank Energy expert Alan Townsend and official of Nigeria Lorne Halpenny.

Jail police strangled

UNB, Chuadanga Miscreants strangled a jail police at

Hatikata village in Sadar upazila early yesterday. The victim was identified as Bazlur Rahman, 30, a police of the district jail and son of Altaf Hossain

of Hatikata village Sources said the miscreants picked up Bazlur from Hatikata crossing while he was going to office at about 2:00am

His body was found in the mornng with his hands and legs tied up. Police sent it to hospital morgue for an autopsy.

Talking to journalists, Chuadanga Jail Superintendent Akkas Ali Akand said the motive behind the killing could not be known. "Police have launched an investigation," he said.

Arms cache found at Iraq embassy

REUTERS, London

A cache of guns, bugging devices and equipment that may have been used for torture has been discovered at Iraq's abandoned embassy in London, the country's newly appointed ambassador said yester-

day. Scotland Yard confirmed "a number of firearms" had been recovered from the embassy in an upmarket area of southwest London but declined to say when.

Dr Salah Al Shaikhly told BBC radio the arms haul, which dates to Saddam Hussein's period in power, included four machine guns, several Uzis and 10 handguns with silencers and had been found in one of the 20-odd safes at the embassy.

"It was amazing, you really despair when you know this kind of arsenal was kept at the Iraq embassy," Al Shaikhly said.

"There were also other things which looked like electric cattle prods." he added.

Aside from boxes of live and spent ammunition, there were also telescopic cameras and bugging devices.

RMG order to shift

FROM PAGE 1

Dhanmondi office. Kearney led a four-day mission in Bangladesh since June 5 to see what was needed to be done in the aftermath of the Spectrum Sweater Factory collapse in Savar.

The mission's purpose was to examine the issues relating to the payment of compensation, structural investigations of all multistorey factories and arrangements for total compliance with the national and international labour standards.

Kearney was accompanied by the Social Compliance Initiative members, including the Cotton Group of Belgium, GAP, Inditex of Spain and Karstadt Quelle of Germany, which together represent a large share of Bangladesh's apparel exports.

Expressing dissatisfaction at the government's inaction to address the problems of working conditions and poor infrastructure. Kearney said 90 percent factories could disappear and buyers may shift their business to other countries if the working environment in factories [in Bangladesh1 is not improved.

He told reporters that the April 11 collapse of the nine-storey garment factory is not a unique incident and warned that many other factories may face the same disaster.

"Providing humanitarian assistance during the disaster is not enough. It is the responsibility of the government to find out how many workers were killed and injured and how many needs medical treatthe small hours yesterday. "Police ment," he said, emphasising the have adopted this new tactics government's role in assisting the instead of crossfire," said Tariqul's workers who lost job in the accident. father Nazrul Islam. Two other members of the dele Senior KMP officials did not gation were Maren Boehm and admit that the outlaws were Javier Chercohes. arrested. They were killed in fac-

"I believe they must have been bugging their own people inside the embassy ... Such was the regime, it didn't trust anybody. Everybody was spying on everybody else," the ambassador said.

The Knightsbridge building was abandoned by Iraqi diplomats in early 2003 in the run up to war in Iraq. Although the imposing structure was burgled several times while it was left empty, thieves were unable to break into the safes.

The discovery of the weapons is likely to renew debate in Britain about guns and diplomatic missions. Under international law, an embassy is regarded as sovereign territory. In 1984, police officer Yvonne

Fletcher was killed by shots that came from the Libyan embassy in London during demonstrations against the country's leader Muammar Gaddafi.

The gunman was smuggled out with other embassy staff under diplomatic immunity although Libya accepted responsibility in 1999 for the shooting and agreed to compensate her family.

that the AL chief requested the delegation to see that garment workers do not suffer due to the government's mismanagement. We also told the delegation that Awami League will continue political pressure on the government to

develop the working condition in the garment sector." Bodies of 2

PBCP FROM PAGE 16

local Awami League office. Tariqul used to live in Nirala

residential area under Khulna thana and zakir was a resident of Rupsha strand road of the same thana.

Deputy commissioner (DC) of Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) Akbar Ali said Bullet-riddled body of Tariqul was recovered from the bypass road in Khanjahan Ali thana while Zakir's body was recovered from Mujgunni area under Khalishpur thana. He was beaten to death, Akbar said.

Zakir was wanted in eight criminal cases including three for murders and three for dacoites. A new motorbike found beside his body was seized, the DC said.

The bodies of both were sent to Khulna Medical College and Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Fathers of both the outlaws told this correspondent that police picked up their sons from roads Tuesday midnight and killed them in

tional feuds among them, said one

with Khanjahan Ali thana and

including fertiliser medicine steel

The government expected a 26

This experience is forcing the

Two general diaries were filed

official on condition of anonymity.

AL office at Sonatola set on fire

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

An Awami League (AL) office at Sonatola was vandalised and set on fire on Tuesday night allegedly by BNP and Jubo Dal activists, a few hours after local Jubo Dal leader Ahsan Habib Ratan came under an attack

Since the incident, many activists of the AL and its front organisations have fled their houses, fearing arrest in a case filed by Ratan against 17 activists of Jubo League and Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) for the alleged attack.

Ratan said some BCL and Jubo League workers attacked him in front of a local cinema hall at around 9:00pm Tuesday when he was returning to his house after attending a party programme. He alleged that the attackers stabbed him after the beating.

AKM Ahsanul Taiyab Zakir, president of Sonatola upazila BNP unit, however, denied the involvement of his activists in vandalising and setting fire to the AL office. He rather blamed the BCL and Jubo League workers for the attack on Ratan.

President of Sonatola Al unit ter appreciated Iran's role in devel-Nurul Anwar Badshah, however, opment and stressed the need for expanding cultural, commercial, termed the attack on Ratan as trade and other bilateral relations "fake". He alleged that the Jubo Dal with Iran to strengthen the ties leaders beat up AL worker, Abdul between the two countries. Mumin, while setting fire to the AL office

Police yesterday arrested Convenor of Sonatola upazila Jubo League Masum Morshed and another leader. Saiful Islam, in connection with the attack on Ratan. In another incident, the local AL

leaders accused 106 local BNP workers for attacking and setting fire to the AL office at Sariakandi in

Bogra Saturday night. Sariakandi upazila AL leaders Shahjahan-ul-Alam, Abul Kalam Azad and Pilu Momtaz filed three separate cases with the magistrate court.

The accused include upazila BNP Convenor Rafiqul Islam, Joint Convenor Rabiul Islam Faruq, Tosadek Hossain Bulu and acting president of municipal BNP Abdu

\$80bn Google takes top media spot **BBC ONLINE**

Internet search phenomenon Google has overtaken a swathe of venerable rivals to become the world's biggest media company by stock market value.

After its shares hit an all-time high on the New York markets on Tuesday, Google is now worth \$80bn (£44bn).

This takes it ahead of media the comparable growth perforiathan Time

Iran wants to import

the meeting

FROM PAGE 16

Case filed

of ProfAKM Saidul Islam.

College and Hospital.

highway on Tuesday.

Iranian Ambassador to

head of the Orthopaedic

Prof Saidul, 50, and his driver

Soon after the accident, students

and doctors of Mymensingh Medical

College and Hospital (MMCH) and

Community Based Medical College

(CBMC) put up barricades on the

highway, damaged about 20 vehi-

cles and clashed with police and

Police charged baton, fired

The meeting sources said the

ministry will order the metropolitan traffic

police department to take action if it

receives any complaints that any

in the city have already increased

their fares by Tk 1-5 in accordance

with distance since the increase of

the price of fuels - including diesel

petrol and kerosene last month

which often leads to quarrels and

even scuffles between commuters

Morshed Pintu, joint secretary of the

Bangladesh Bus Truck Owners'

Association, however claimed

'None of our association members

is taking increased fare and we will

not increase the bus fare until the

Communications Minister

Nazmul Huda presided over the

meeting held at the ministry's con-

ference room, where Housing and

Public Work Minister Mirza Abbas

and Communications Secretary Md

from his coalition's lawmakers are

high -- the least being demands for

allocation of Tk 1 crore to each

constituency. The lawmakers wil

need show-off projects with unac-

countable use of revenues and that

has been reflected in the spending

spree in the rural infrastructure and

development projects in the revised

ADP. The next vear's ADP also finds

the highest increase in local govern-

ment ministry and a more than 75

percent increase in Block Allocation

Tax amnesty for undeclared income

is set to remain, albeit in a curtailed

And Saifur has to toe the IMF line

Shafigul Islam were also present.

committee gives its report."

Talking to The Daily Star, Golam

and bus conductors.

Meanwhile, many bus operators

operator is taking increased fare.

Department of Rangpur Medical

Nazrul Islam, 35, died instantly

when a bus collided with their pri-

vate car on the Dhaka-Mymensingh

Bangladesh Mohammad Beheshti

Monfared was also present during

FROM PAGE 16

the two governments. "The two countries could exchange their respective opportunities to building better understanding on trade and economy," he pointed out.

Commerce Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury informed journalists that an agreement is going to be signed today with Iran to give a boost to the bilateral trade relations

"The agreement will allow us to get access of our products also to some other countries like Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan," he added.

Apart from this. Bangladesh will strongly move for getting duty-free access of some products to Iran, he said. "We will request Iran to at least offer reduced duty on some Bangladeshi goods.'

On a persisting trade deficit of \$ transport workers. 50 million Bangladesh suffers with rubber bullets and tear gas shells to Iran, he said Bangladesh plans to bring the situation under control, hold a single country trade fair this leaving 40 people, including ten year in Iran to attract Iranian invesstudents, wounded. tors to invest here as well as to promote local products.

Body formed MEETS PM In the afternoon, the visiting Iranian FROM PAGE 16 minister paid a courtesy call on current per-kilometre fares of Tk Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her 0.62 for 52-seat buses and Tk 0.75 office for minibuses.

During the talks, the prime minis-

"There is ample scope for

expanding trade and commerce

with Iran and the ongoing exchange

of visits at various levels are keep-

ing significant contribution in

cementing the relationship," she

Bandladeshi products like jute, jute

goods. leather, leather goods.

ceramics and pharmaceuticals, the

prime minister said there is great

possibility of exporting these items

Shariatmadari emphasised

strengthening the joint economic

commission, which in return will

help expand trade and commerce

between the two counties. He also

suggested formation of a joint

economic council and joint chamber

During the July-April period of FY05,

NBR revenue showed a moderate growth of 13.5 percent, achieving

71.34 percent of the annual target,

whereas the matching figure was

72.91 percent in the previous fiscal

vear. This shows that it is unlikely

be met at the end of the year.

that the NBR revenue target would

also not very encouraging with a

marginal growth. Though the real-

ised figure for July-February is 4.69

percent higher than its benchmark

figure of FY04, it is much lower than

Non-NBR revenue collection is

Unquiet time for Saifur

form

Mentioning the quality of

said

lo Iran

in this regard.

FROM PAGE 1

Jailer Jannatul Farhad the High Court order, he said, "This order will not do, you need to take permission from the Dhaka Central Jail authorities.

The lawyers, Bidisha's father Abu Bakar Siddiq, a former Rajshahi University professor, and her sister Manisha left at about 7:15pm.

"After consulting Bidisha's father we will file a contempt of court case in the High Court against the jail authorities for dishonouring the High Court order," said Barrister Tanjibul Alam, another lawyer of Bidisha. CASE MEANT FOR

HARASSMENT

Another counsel for Bidisha, Shafi Uddin Bhuiyan, argued in the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate. Dhaka that the cases were filed to harass and humiliate his client. He maintained that the government pressured Ershad into filing the case to advance its petty interests Moreover, Bidisha is a victim of the

The lawvers also submitted the certified copy of High Court orders.

The forwarding report Investigation officer (IO) Kazi Nure Alam, also officer in charge of Gulshan Police Station, placed before the lower court yesterday says Bidisha gave important information during her three-day remand, which is being verified Moreover, she is a short-tempered woman who poses a threat to the life of the complainant if she gets bail until the investigation of the case is over, the IO said.

Magistrate Rafigul Islam rejected the bail petition and directed authorities to comply with the High Court directives. Bidisha broke down in tears and slapped her forehead on hearing the order.

Later, she was taken to the court Magistrate Jagannath Das Khokon where Bidisha was shown arrested in the other case on charges of false personification in one of her three Bangladesh passports, and providing false informa tion about her place and date of birth.

In the two passports issued or March 1, 1996 and February 27, 2000 she mentioned her name as Bidisha Siddiq Wilson, place of birth as Bagherhat and date of birth to be Julv 1. 1967.

However, in another passport ssued on January 7, 2003, the date of birth reads March 6, 1971 and place of birth Dhaka.

The defence lawyers, while moving for her bail, said their client was not involved in the matter Moreover, the police implicated her as part of a conspiracy to harass

The court, however, rejected the bail petition, but it directed the authorities to comply with the High Court order and allow Bidisha's family to meet her

BIDIŚHA FEARS FOR LIFE Bidisha fears that she may be killed in police custody. "Ask Dr Kamal to put up my case, otherwise the police may kill me in their custody Barrister Tanjibul Alam quoted Bidisha as saying.

Bidisha later told journalists yesterday that the IO asked her to disclose names of the journalists who, according to the IO, maintain contact with her. She did not name any, though.

She also alleged that she was not allowed to sleep properly and take medicine.

"I did not embezzle money ither did I steal mobile set or damage furniture," Bidisha said and added that it is Ershad who is a thief as he has stolen her son Eric Ershad.

Japan investors

FROM PAGE 1

The minister and the delegation members will visit Bogra and Rangpur on Saturday to select the factory sites and see for themselves the quantum of the raw materials in the areas.

The Japanese investors have showed their interest in establishing such industrial units here because of "availability of bamboo as raw material and low labour cost".

They said they will set up more such factories in Bangladesh if their initial investment proved success-ful. The production will be exported and used as raw material in Bangladesh's garment industry.

The minister thanked the foreign nvestors and said, "The Bangladesh government will provide all possible support for establishing the industry."

He expressed the hope with the setting up of such enterprise, Bangladesh would earn huge foreign currencies and the unem ployment problem would be mitiaated.

36 including

FROM PAGE 16

The worst attack was in the restive Sunni Arab town of Al-Hawijah, north of Baghdad, where 14 Iraqis were killed, half of them Iraqi soldiers, and 20 wounded in a trio of suicide car bombs against army

checkpoint. Nine people were killed in Mosul. including four peshmerga militiamen reportedly shot dead by police after they were mistaken for insurgents and three students killed when unknown gunmen burst into their apartment

In the capital, an employee of the foreign ministry was killed in a driveby shooting and a policeman was shot dead in the western Amil neighbourhood.

Government spokesman Leith Kubba said Operation Lightning, now expanded south of the capital to the so-called triangle of death, had netted 887 detainees since May 22, revised from an earlier figure of more than 1,200.

"Fighting these criminal networks ... and eradicating them will not happen with a knockout blow. but rather it will be a slow death and it will happen with continuous efforts to isolate them." Kubba said.

Awami League leader Faruk Khan MP, Syed Abul Hossain and Habibur Rahman Siraj assisted the opposition leader during the hourlona meetina.

> Later, Faruk Khan told reporters Khalishpur thana.

Mobile to be taxed

the bulk of the mobile sets is smugtextiles, garment and ceramics. gled in, depriving the government of its expected tariff earnings. percent growth in the total NBR tax

At present, there are more than 5 through collection of import taxes in millions cellphone subscribers and the current fiscal year, but in reality the growth rate of the subscribers is the growth has been recorded much about 100 percent. The five mobile below at 11 percent the last 10 companies are aiming to raise the months number of mobile phone users to 15 million by the next year. government to set a target of 13 percent growth in import tax in the

Taking advantage of the low prices and lucrative offers by the mobile companies, many users are using two SIM cards in one mobile, which is why the government is planning to impose a tax of Tk 1,500 for each SIM.

If parliament approves the government plan, the price of each SIM card may go as high as Tk 2.000 against a paltry Tk 75 to Tk 300 now.

The scope for making black money white is going to be over at the end of this month. The finance minister on different occasions said this provision contradicts the antimoney laundering law as well as the spirit of the constitution of Anticorruption Commission.

But at the last moment, the government is going to extend the period by another year, arguing that this would encourage investment.

The government is raising the ceiling of zero tax from the existing Tk 100,000 up to Tk 120,000. The decision will be announced in the upcoming budget but the new ceiling is expected to be enforced from the fiscal year 2006-07.

The government's recent pay hike for the public servants. believed to push up the pay scale in the private sector too, as well as the present inflation rate are making the government to re-fix the zero tax ceiling, sources said.

The tax holiday facility is going to be restricted to just 12 sectors, valued at \$78bn.

The valuation comes in spite of the fact that Google's annual sales total just \$3.2bn, a fraction of Time Warner's \$42bn.

Some analysts believe Google's shares are now overpriced, a rerun of the heady valuations seen during the internet boom of the late 1990s. Others maintain that Google's high stock value reflects its future earning potential and that its shares could go as high as \$325-350.

Google has become the world's most highly-valued media company after only 10 months of trading as a public company.

It now dwarfs more traditional market capitalisations of between \$54bn and \$55bn.

When it first floated in August last year, its shares debuted at \$85.

Google makes most of its money from the sale of advertising that sits alongside its search results.

Ex-chairman

The growth target in income tax

would be set at 23 percent and in case of VAT and supplementary duty, the target would be 18 percent.

The government also aims to curb tax evasion, bring new sectors under the tax net, and change the laws in the upcoming budget in a bid to collect additional revenue.

BAF assures

coming budget.

FROM PAGE 1 A BAF maintenance team reached the spot yesterday morning and began the recovery operation, which will take a few days, an official

said. The four-member probe committee visited the spot yesterday, said the ISPR. Preliminary findings say the plane crashed due to 'mechanical faults', but the team is still working to learn about details.

The ISPR said the conditions of Asma Khondokar and her one-anda-half-year-old daughter Tua are improving at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH).

But the condition of Rousan Ara one of the five tenants on whom the plane crashed and who suffered burns, deteriorated at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital

media companies such as Viacom and Walt Disney, which have stock

FROM PAGE 1 collection for the next fiscal year

Injured Atahar was rushed to Bagerhat Sadar Hospital and later shifted to Badsha Mian Memorial Clinic in Khulna in a critical condition. Family sources said he would be taken to Dhaka for better treatment.

Police launched a block raid in Bagerhat town after the bomb attack and picked up 24 people. They recovered a pair of sandals from the

"We are yet to find out the motive behind the attack." said Mostafa Kamal, superintendent of police at Bagerhat

Hasına

FROM PAGE 1 age of the Supreme Court judges to

have its favoured ex-judge as chief of the next caretaker government.

"With this ill motive, the government wants to retain power in the next general elections through vote rigging," she said.

Sumon's mother Amela Khatun, the political pressures will be too pesky to tackle, and as the domino father Abdul Hakim. AL leaders effect goes, this can squish the Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Haji economic front. Mohammad Selim and Jubo League Chairman Jahangir Kabir Nanok were present, among others, during the meeting with Hasina.

mance of FY04 (20.71 percent). Low domestic resource mobilisation and growth facility programme tion following the floods of 2004 is Not only that, he has to go by the also leading the economy to an conditions of the Development Support Credit. He has to increased budget deficit in FY05. The share of bank borrowing in total strengthen the income tax LTU and deficit financing has increased from catch tax-dodgers, a tricky task in a 5.3 percent during the first eight politically divisive society. Expansion of the VAT net to more months of FY04 to 15.4 percent during the same period of FY05. On services and a significant exempthe other hand, the share of nontion in tax are also politically diametbank borrowing has reduced from rical decisions he has to make. The 77.8 percent in FY04 to 35.2 percent NBR reforms also can spark bad in FY05, as savings instruments became unattractive.

political publicity, but Saifur has to work to bring Agrani and Janata Inflation has become a major banks to the point of divestment. concern as it peaked on a point-to-But one needs to wait if Saifur point basis from 5.65 percent from really acts to stem the social presthe start of the fiscal year to 6.72 sures that have manifested over the last few years. The inequality percent in March, which makes monetary management even trickbetween the rich and the poor has ier. The central bank has been widened markedly -- the wealth of grappling with the inflation- associthe rich grew at a much faster rate ated pressures, often rubbed with that the poor -- raising serious power play, such as interest rate doubts over the government's

management and exchange rate. claims of pro-poor budget formula-Export earnings for the Julytion for years. In the streets, this March period have been showing a juxtaposition is even starker with the encouraging 12.5 percent growth growing number of swanky cars, but that offers little comfort, as the real test for the readymade garcontrasted by a speedier growth of slums. The regional wealth disparity ments, fetching around 80 percent of the export earnings, will face a real challenge this year. This is even is even starker, which needs deeper political commitment of devolution more pertinent as RMG export for of power, something that has always the first time in a decade failed to remained a cry in the woods. achieve a double-digit growth rate and ended with a 9.5 percent increase.

textiles, food and fertiliser. Now it is

feared that if this trend continues. it

would build up an alarming pressure

on the balance of payment situation in

famous cycle of BOP tension trans-

lating into fiscal tension. With

increased investment leading to

pick-up in imports, it will put foreign

exchange under pressure and the

BoP will be strained. If Saifur wants

to ease up the situation with foreign

loan, this will lead to increased debt

service liability with the ultimate

pressure on the fiscal situation. But

what else can he do unless new tax

are something Saifur can sustain,

If all these economic pressures

reforms bring in more money?

And Saifur has to think of the

the next fiscal year.

roads to choose. He can think it is the last year and so go for a political But the increments in exports were spin, or he may think of a bigger dwarfed by a faster increase in imports, which is 25.1 percent higher picture where economy comes first and where good investment and than the matching period (Julypolicy can spur equitable growth. February) of the previous fiscal year The major contribution of this growth came from petroleum product payments other than capital goods

> PBCP FROM PAGE 16

correspondent Kalyan Bannerjee, Jugantor correspondent Subhas Chowdhury, Abul Kalam Azad, executive editor of the Patradut, and Anisul Rahim, editor of the Satkhira Chitra.

restaurants and shopping malls

Saifur today does not have many

The PBCP sent the hand written letter in red ink from Patkelghata Post Office in Tala upazila. It said, 'Some journalists in Satkhira have stood in our way despite repeated warnings. The party has decided to eliminate them as they are hatching a conspiracy against us."

Panic has gripped the journalists in Satkhira after the five received the death threat. Earlier on January 22 last year, nine journalists received death threat letters.

Meanwhile, journalists in the Saifur has to play politician this district in a joint statement yestertime in allocating funds and commitday demanded that the government ting to reforms. Already demands should ensure their safety.

spot.