Initial govt nod

two long-haul planes for international routes and as many small ones for regional routes to meet the immediate needs.

"This is not our final commitment"

minister for civil aviation and officials of Biman and Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh vesterday at the Secretariat. Saifur admitted to the waiting reporters that new planes are required for passenger safety and improving services of the national flag carrier.

"We were saved in Sylhet because of Hazrat Shahjalal's blessings and again in Chittagong perhaps because of Hazrat Shah Amanat's blessings, but how long will we be able to survive on the blessings of the pirs and fakirs

night because of the 25-year-old planes. I am always anxious about whether or not Biman aircraft would land safely with the passengers. That is why we have sat with the finance minister to get rid of the

Mir Nasir later told the reporters that they have been offered Airbuses for \$90 million each and Boeing 777 for \$129 million apiece.

"Airbus and Boeing are the two companies in the world that supply aircraft. The cost will determine which company we will buy the Biman profitable," Saifur said.

progress over the last one or two years, it performance has never been quite satisfactory. There have been no returns on the money spent in the past on purchase of aircraft." the finance minister observed.

Continued Saifur: "If the management is not made efficient and the organisational structure effective before the new aircraft are bought, it is possible that there will be no returns on investment this

time too." The minister asked the officials to seek out a strategic partner for Biman as is done all over the world and told them that Thai Airways and Singapore Airlines have grown

He said after the recent crashlanding of a Biman flight in Chittagong, the authorities are struggling to keep the international flight schedule. "That is why the civil aviation ministry rushed to me with the proposal of buying aircraft, but there is no allocation in the budget for aircraft purchase.'

The ministry officials told him that they would buy the planes either on credit or through other arrangements, but for that the government's guarantee is

Saifur explained that the government could give a guarantee of \$400 million at the maximum. "(But) if the entire limit is exhausted for purchasing planes, how would the government provide guarantee for other purposes?" he quipped.

Graft grips

become dilapidated by now."

The minister was optimistic that Bangladesh will become a midincome level country after achieving the Millenium Development Goal by 2015 if the current trend of develop ment continued.

Tax ombudsman bill

tax ombudsman functions properly, he added.

After the passage of the bill, the president will appoint the tax ombudsman for a four-year term. He or she will head a separate office with necessary staff. The ombudsman can deal with NBR related taxes including VAT, import duty and

The tax ombudsman will be independent in discharging his duties and he can only be removed the way a Supreme Court judge is

The bill proposed for providing the ombudsman with judicial power to investigate any allegation filed by a taxpayer. The ombudsman himself can probe any complaint or authorise any official at his office to

According to the proposed bill, the authorised official will have

warrant asking anybody to appear at his office.

Γhe office of the ombudsman wil be a recommending body. The government is obliged to implement its recommendations. The government will have to explain the causes if it fails to implement the recom-

mendation, the bill proposed. from an advisory committee to dispose of a complaint, proposed

The ombudsman can form an investigation team and direct the team to raid the house of the taxpayers or tax officials concerned when

and if necessary.
If a tax official is found guilty, the ombudsman will recommend necessary action against him. If the NBR disagrees with the ombudsman's recommendations, it can

explain to the ombudsman the reasons of disagreement.

If the ombudsman continues to differ from the NBR on any particular issue, the ombudsman will seek the finance minister or the president's

making false allegation against tax officials, the ombudsman can suggest punitive actions against him. The tax ombudsman will requ

larly submit to the president an annual report within three months of completion of a calendar year.

Before filing any complaint against the tax offices with the ombudsman, a taxpayer will have to sign a declaration. If an issue is already dealt with by court or pending in court, the ombudsman's office will not deal with it.

The bill proposed the tax ombudsman has to be a person less than 67 years old. A retired judge or government official can be chosen for this post. The ombudsman will have experience in and knowledge

of revenue and tax issues. According to the NBR, only 17 lakh people in Bangladesh, with a population of 14 crore, have tax identification numbers (TIN) and less than five lakh actually pay tax The taxpayers often complain of bribery and harassment.

VESSELS'WAIVER Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain yesterday placed in parliament a bill titled 'Bangladesh Flag Vessels (Protection) Ordinance, 1982' proposing another two-year extension of general waiver of taxes on the Bangladeshi vessels for smooth handling of cargoes.

The two-year general waiver is due to expire on July 11 next.

The bill is likely to be passed on Thursday as the minister has asked the parliamentary standing committee on the shipping ministry to submit a report today after scrutinising the bill. The parliamentary body last night approved the bill.

Graft, lax law enforcement

away from some places due to poor image, he said but maintained that Bangladesh is a worthwhile place for foreign investment. Bangladesh-German Chamber

of Commerce and Industry (BGCCI) organised the briefing to explain the outcome of the visit of a business delegation to Germany from June 6

visits by businesspeople can help improve the image abroad, adding a high-powered business delegation from Germany would also visit Bangladesh soon

Explaining the business situation after the quota-phaseout from January this year, he said buyers do not give up when they find that trade partners are reliable and trustwor-

He said Bangladesh's lacks the capability to diversify its export items and added that 90 percent o its total export is readymade garment. But there are so many items that can be added to the export

Bangladesh's export to Germany is five times its imports. Andreas said and added that German buyers are thinking to replace plastic products as these are not environmentfriendly and so natural fibre jute has

a huge potential. Agro-processing is another area with great potential. He recommended that Bangladeshi companies participate in the Germany trade fair to estab-

lish direct contact with the buyers Ruhul Amin, president, and Nasir A Choudhury, vice-president, of the

BGCCI also spoke at the briefing. Sved Feroze Ahmed, director of Siemens Bangladesh Ltd, Shah Syed Kamal, managing director of Anupam Infotek Ltd, Waqar A Choudhury, director of Nascom Pvt Ltd. Giasuddin Ahmed. chairman of Thai Poly Shawn (Bd) Ltd and Arif Chowdhury, general manager of Pan Aviation Ltd, among others, were the members of Bangladesh

purpose of the visit was to establish direct contact with German businesses and improve the image of Bangladesh in Germany, as it is the second largest trading partner of

Bangladesh after the US. Congestion on Dhaka-Chittagong highway as well as at the Chittagong port and poor infrastructure, particularly in the telecommunications sector, are hindering business between the two coun-

journalists that Bangladesh is organising "Bangladesh Business Day" on September 28 in the middle of the Asia Pacific Week 2005 scheduled from September 21 to

October 2 at Berlin mayor's office. Nasir Choudhury said the business delegation faced criticism in Germany because Bangladesh businessmen do not visit there

Germany imported goods worth around 1 billion euro from Bangladesh in the 2003-04 financial

BNP cadres

the Natore Sadar Police Station accusing BNP cadres Maruf, Sohel and five unnamed.

The victim had an affair with BNP

wearing 'burka' (veil) went to the school gate in a microbus on that day and called her out saying that Mithu was waiting for her.

they dragged her onto the microbus and sped away.

place. Maruf proposed to marry her that she rejected At night they made her drink and

after another. As she fainted, they dropped her n a ditch beside a road near Natore

City College at dead of night. The victim's family members recovered her from there the following day and provided her treatment

at home. As the victim's father was preparng to file a case, local Ward Commissioner Sajjad Hossain Sohag, who is affiliated with local BNP's youth front Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal, threatened him with dire conseguences if any case is filed for the

ncident. He offered the family Tk 20,000 for not filing a case

He is also learnt to have told his riends that he collected about Tk 90,000 from the rapists to cover the

Local journalists came to know the matter and informed the police who after investigation recorded the

were absconding till filing of this

The incident has created anxiety among local people

to come to power if Jatiya Party goes to another side. That is why it (AL) now wants to save its prestige by boycotting the election on the plea of caretaker government

reform," he noted. Addressing a conference of Jatiya Jubo Sanghati, youth front of JP, at a city hotel, Ershad also criticised AL for rejecting the budget

two major political parties [AL and BNP] can win the next election with the support of Jatiya Party.
"In the last election, the four-

party alliance secured 47 percent votes and Awami League 40 percent. And Jatiya Party obtained eight percent," he explained and claimed that his party has gained more public support in the last few

Party to go to power." Frshad said 'We must share the power and go to power," he added.

Bidisha, the former president said, "She was a curse on the Jatiya Party. Now we are free. Every member of the party is now happy.

"If you find your wife takes a passport showing another man as her husband, how do you tolerate it?" said the JP chairman. He also said, "If I file a defama-

tion suit against the woman [Bidisha] for filing a false GD (general diary) against me, she will definitely be arrested.

Ershad also blasted newspapers for making propaganda against him on the issue of Bidisha although he has shown the reasons for the divorce.

sense of security has been prevailing in the country. But he commented that Rab is not a permanent solution to tackle crime.

Ershad urged the government to look into the price hike of essentials. presidium members Kazi Zafar Áhmed, ABM Ruhul Amin Hawlader, Abu Sufian, Golam Kibria Tipu, Mostafa Jamal Haider, Syed Mahtab Uddin and Jubo Sanghati Convenor Humayan Kabir also spoke in the conference.

The representatives of Jubo Sanghati from different districts ioined the meetina.

MPs demand

Amid huge table-thumbing from both the benches of the House, including even some ministers Moshiur Rahman said "GrameenPhone has been plundering crores of taka. It charges Tk 7 per minute call which is the highest n the world.' In reply, Aminul Haq said the

parliamentary standing committee on the ministry summoned both the BTRC [Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission] and the private cell phone operators in a meeting to discuss the matter. "Both BTRC and the private operators have assured us that the call charges will be reduced," he said.

Tajul Islam Chowdhury asked the minister to take steps to cancel the incoming call charges imposed by different private cell phone opera-Replying to another question, the

telecommunications minister said contracts of interconnectivity between the state-run mobile phone company Teletalk and the private operators will be signed very soon. On reduction of the charges of

3rd-party to vet Niko

fresh relief well to tame the fire in the

gas field in Sunamganj district. Other stakeholders, especially the locals, who have to bear the brunt of the blaze--twice within six months--also were skeptical about the fresh drilling before checking its

Advisor to the energy ministry Mahmudur Rahman said an interna tional expert having vast experience in drilling relief wells and controlling blowout accidents will be appointed for the vetting. "I have already asked

Petrobangla and Bapex to seek an international expert's opinion about the work plan and design submitted by Niko Resources to drill a fresh rélief well," he told reporters. The latest blowout at Tengratila gas field occurred on June 24 during

blown out in January. He said the government seeks the third party vetting since it wants to remove all sorts of uncertainty and skepticism over the fresh bid for drilling a third well in order to avert any further accident.

Mahmudur Rahman held a meeting with officials of the Petrobangla and Bapex to discuss the work plan and design the

Canadian company submitted last Thursday to the ministry for

approval to start the fresh bailout

drilling in the gas field. The advisor said both the arrangements for new drilling and third party vetting would simultaneously run so that the preparation for controlling the flames could not be delayed or hampered.

Tata accepts

FROM PAGE 1 Bangladesh Railway. So no problem will arise in handing over the land to Tata," a land ministry official

The Tata negotiation team arrived in Bangladesh for the third round of talks on July 2 and had a series of talks with government officials of different levels

Earlier on May 9, the government and the Tata Group agreed to kick off formal negotiations on May 25 and wind it up by August 31 to clear the way for signing the investment contract before November 30.

Tata on April 20 formally submitted a \$2.5 billion investment proposal for setting up a 1,000 MW nower station a steel mill with an annual production capacity of 420,000 tonnes and a one milliontonne capacity fertiliser plant

Niko busy with gas

spoke in favour of gas exploration, even after the twin explosions at Tengratila. "We are not afraid. We know such fire can happen in any gas field." said Mizanur Rahman a local businessman. The area will not develop without gas exploration, he

A large number of people including women and children were coming every day from even far-flung areas to watch the inferno.

AGITATION OVER COMPENSATION

Around 250 villagers under the banner of Tengratila Dabi Aday Sangram Parishad (Tengratila association to realise compensation) yesterday besieged the Doara Bazar UNO office, demanding resumption of application form distribution for compensation for the gas blowout damage.

The government on Sunday stopped distribution of the forms and on Monday handed out the compensation money for the damages caused by the first blowout in

But the locals alleged many genuine victims of the fire were excluded while many fake ones included in the list of compensation recipients. The villagers demanded compensation for the deprived ones and demonstrated on the UNO office complex and formed a human chain to drive their demands home.

In a press conference yesterday afternoon at Tengratila, the Songram Parishad leaders alleged irregularities in distribution of compensation money and demanded removal of the UNO and dismissal of the committee that had drawn up

UNO Mohihuzzaman said the deputy commissioner of Sunamganj would come on Wednesday and reassess the damages to the locals. adding the form distribution would not resume before that.

He said all the compensation money had been distributed on Monday, except that for 15 to 20, who did not turn up.

AGAINST NIKO

At least three organisations including the main opposition Awami League staged demonstrations in Sylhet yesterday.

The Syllhet district and city units of Awami League (AL) jointly organised a one-hour human chain from 5:15pm at Court Point in the city, protesting at the irresponsible operation of Niko and demanding proper compensation to the victims of the January 7 blowout.

A brief rally followed the human chain, addressed by Sylhet City Corporation Mayor and City AL President Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran, Sylhet District AL President ANM Shafique and General Secretary Iftekhar Hossain Shamim, and city AL General

proper inquiry and tough measures to realise compensation for the gas destroyed and the blowout victims at the earliest. At a press conference at Sylhet Press Club in the afternoon, leaders

of the Sylhet-based Chhatak Samity and Dakshin Chhatak Unnavan Parishad demanded immediate scrapping of the contract with Niko. They said it has been proven that

minimum safety measures. The two citizens' forums announced a four-point demand and a five-day agitation programme from today ending at a human chain on July 10 at the Central Shahid Minar in the city, from where a fresh agitation programme will be

The demands include immediate publication of a white paper on gas extraction from the gas fields in Chhatak, scrapping of the contract with Niko and halting all of its activities in the country, and assessment of losses at Tengratila and realisation of compensation for those from

Dhaka energising

FROM PAGE 16

is also looking to new dimensions including Russia, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Eastern Europe, Khan said.

Morshed Khan said to strengthen regional, inter-regional and multilateral cooperation, sustained efforts are being pursued on three fronts--bilateral, regional and

Bilaterally, Bangladesh's unwavering policy is to maintain close relations with all its neighbours on the basis of sovereign equality, mutual respect and noninterference in internal affairs as well as settlement of outstanding bilateral issues through dialogue and negotiation, he said.

On the regional front, Bangladesh is committed to maintain the positive momentum and credibility of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) to promote its socioeconomic mandate, create a broad-based climate of confidence building and reduce tension in the

About global front, the foreign minister said a cardinal priority for Bandladesh is to play a leading role through concrete initiatives mixed with moderation and pragmatism in all socioeconomic forums to promote the cause of developing countries as a whole and the least developed countries in particular. Bangladesh's commitment to

strengthen the role of the UN as the central organ for the cooperative management of the world problems and our membership of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Commonwealth, and Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) have enhanced our representative capacity and contribution to the goals of peace, security, justice and development. To keep pace with the circum-

stances, Bangladesh is seeking a

new agenda and have identified two

key factors--the impact of

plobalisation and new ideas and techniques generated by general

and information technology, he said. He said the 9/11 incidents

affected inter-state relations. Over 30 participants from different professions participated in the three-month course. Diplomats from different foreign missions. former ambassadors, and academics attended the certificate distribu-

Dhaka skips

pipeline, they will obviously go for that, but "If they feel that the route through Bangladesh will be better option, they will come to us. We're waiting for the outcome of bilatera negotiations between India and

said he is waiting for official response from India regarding Bangladesh's three-point proposal seemingly tagged with the tri-nation gas pipeline project.

trade imbalance, providing corridor for Nepalese goods to Bangladeshi ports and access to hydroelectric potential in Bhutan. The Myanmar energy minister's

posal discussed and agreed upon in January, the pipeline was to be routed through Arakan (Rakhine) state in Myanmar and the Indian states of Mizoram and Tripura before crossing Bangladesh to

'Mastermind

the sources mentioned

State Minister for Home Lutfozzaman Babar at a meeting on March 30 termed Dhira, a ward level Jamaat leader in Khulna, the mastermind and financier of Belal murder. If he is arrested, the mystery behind the killings of Belal and another journalist. Humavun Kabir

Balu, would be unfolded, he said.

He ordered police to arrest Dhira Acting on in a tip off that Dhira was moving about at Malibagh crossing in Dhaka, Detective Branch (DB) of Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) contacted the officerin-charge of Paltan Police Station for arresting Dhira. A team of Paltan police rushed to the spot and nabbed him from a business firm at about 4:00 pm.

A seven-member KMP team immediately left for Dhaka to take the arrestee to Khulna by last night, said KMP Deputy Commissioner Akbar Ali.

Police sources said Dhira is an illegal firearms dealer and has close links to Islamic militants and extremists since 1992. He took training in a foreign country on handling arms and grenades.

He is a close associate of founder of Purba Banglaar Communist Party's Janajuddha faction Abdur Rashid Malitha alias Tapan and two other leaders, Shoiab and Shumon. He is one of the financiers of this outlawed party the sources added.

Dhira had threatened Belal with

death in January this year. Belal, Khulna bureau chief of Dainik Sangram, was fatally injured in a bomb attack on the night of February 5 at Khulna Press Club and succumbed to injuries on February 11 at the Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka.

Dhira went into hiding soon after the incident.

5 outlaws

FROM PAGE 16

The convicts are Naldanga regional PBCP commander Ataur Rahman, group leader Ashraf Hossain and armed cadres Saiful Islam Ripon. Ashraful Islam Raia and Abdul Jalil

Tribunal judge AFM Aminul Islam gave the verdict in a case from Natore district. Public prosecutor Ketabuddin said police did not inform the tribu-

nal about Saiful's killing till the

Rajshahi Divisional Speedy Trial

judgement was delivered. Of the five, Saiful was kidnapped and killed on March 14 last year by Bangla Bhai's organisation Muslim Rakkha Mujahidin Oikkya Parishad that was later turned into Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB). Ataur was held with a bag of

and was given a 40-year jail term by a Natore court on Monday. Ashraf and Ashraful were held in Rajshahi while Jalil is absconding. PBCP operatives had termed Majedur, Madhnagar union BNP president, a 'class enemy' and

arms in Natore a few months ago

slaughtered him near Madhnagar railway station in April, 2003. The murder of Gama, a nephew of the deputy minister, and repeated PBCP threats to him had sparked off an anti-outlaw agitation by local BNP that resulted in the vigilante action by Bangla Bhai's Jagrata Muslim Janata. The JMJB is blamed

for 22 murders and torturing more than 100 people since April 2004. Meanwhile, with yesterday's judgment, the tribunal is now left

with almost no cases. The tribunal has so far awarded death penalty to 27 people, life imprisonment to 228, varying jail terms to 56 and acquitted some 356 others in 94 cases it disposed of since its inception in November,

Nine cases out of 104 that were sent to the tribunal are now pending with the High Court and only one

Dc-10

FROM PAGE 1 the aircraft 150 feet away from the runway, and later the state minister also agreed with the decision to bring the aircraft to the hanger, Airport Manager squadron leader

"We think we can say something about it tomorrow [Wednesday] only after monitoring today's progress of salvation work," said a ground engineer seeking anonymity yester-

flight from Dubai with 215 passengers on board skidded off the runway after it was forced to make a belly-landing "due to technical faults" on Friday morning. Bangladesh Army yesterday

brought three 90-tonne trolleys, two

hreakdown vehicles and one

armoured recovery vehicle to the

airport to speed up the salvation "We are now filling earth and constructing four makeshift brickroads. After completion of this work we will try to lift the aircraft by airbags and then place the trolleys beneath it to bring the aircraft onto the runway and finally take the aircraft to the hanger," commanding

team Col Masud told journalists. Meanwhile, Biman officials are yet to give any decision about two flights each with 221 passengers scheduled for Abu Dhabi and Muscat at 8:45pm and 10:45pm today. "The final decision in this regard depends on the progress of salvation work," Biman's district manager Ahmed Hossain told this correspondent over phone yester-

Envoys under target

apparent kidnap attempt "I am safe but it was a very narrow escape," Khan told AFP by telephone

from Baghdad.
As US President George W. Bush hailed the sacrifices made in rebuilding Iraq, violence continued to rage, with four women gunned down on their way to work at Baghdad airport.

Gunmen aboard a pickup truck opened fire on Hassan al-Ansari, the Bahraini charge d'affaires, while he was travelling in his car with diplomatic-license plates in the upscale Mansur district, an interior ministry source said. Yarmuk hospital said Ansari was

treated for a gunshot wound in his right shoulder before leaving with auards. Witnesses said Anasri was ambushed by at least eight gunmen

after leaving his residence.
"Two men got out of their cars and screamed at him 'get out of your car' and at me 'get back inside'," a butcher shop owner said.

Instead, the diplomat kept going, and two of the men shot at him with an assault rifle and pistol, he said. Ansari's car slowed down, but

when the men ran after him he accel-

Two hundred meters further on Ansari stopped in a street called 14 Nissan near a policeman and cried out: "I am a diplomat, help me!" The policeman named Adel said "he

erated and managed to get away.

was bleeding a lot. His suit, case and car were covered with blood. A short time later, a police patrol passed by and took him to the hospital. A spokesman for the Iraqi government said Egypt's Ihab al-Sharif, who was appointed ambassador June 1

but was yet to present his credentials, may have contacted groups close to his captors, which compromised his security. No group has yet claimed responsibility for abducting Egypt's Sharif, who was set to become the first ambassador from an Arab nation to

Iraq since the fall of Saddam Sharif was also the first head of mission to be abducted since Irag's nostage crisis began.

The Iraqi government's spokesman expressed surprise Sharif was travelling on Baghdad's perilous roads without much protection and said that his security may have been compromised by contacts he may have had with political groups with ties to insurgents. "The only advice we give is that if a

diplomat from this mission or another

wants to contact political groups that

may be close to armed groups then the least he can do is tell the government which can bear some responsibility,"Leith Kubba told reporters.

"We do not know the circumstances (surrounding Sharif's kidnapping) but this is one of the possi-

Kubba said the targeting of for-eign diplomats is part of a calculated effort by insurgents to discourage countries from dealing with the Iraqi government. A western diplomat, who did not wish to be identified, told AFP that a

attacked on the dangerous airport road on Sunday leaving two people wounded and a vehicle riddled with almost 30 bullets. Insurgents briefly held another

Russian embassy convoy was

Egyptian diplomat in July 2004 and also kidnapped an Iranian envoy, but In further violence, four female employees at Baghdad airport were killed and three others wounded

western Ameriyah area, an interior ministry source said.

The attack happened at about 8:00 am (0400 GMT) in Ameriyah, a tense area in western Baghdad and was followed by clashes between gunmen and Iraqi security forces, the source said adding it was unclear yet f there were any casualties from the

There have been several deadly incidents in the past involving Iragis working at the airport.

A convoy of western security guards was hit in a roadside bomb outside the Iranian embassy damagng a vehicle and wounding one Iraqi

vilian, said the US military. Earlier on Tuesday gunmen wounded the top envoy from Bahrain. Egypt's envoy was kidnapped over the weekend

ACC to visit

FROM PAGE 1

situation and prompted it to initiate steps, at least to spare its blushes. Besides, the commission is

preparing to probe the recent blowout in Tengratila gas field as well as all the corruption allegations against Canadian oil company Niko. The allegations levelled against Niko include inefficient handling in gas exploration, irregularity in the sale of gas from the Feni gas field, and gifting a luxury car to the ex-energy inister Mosharraf Hossain.

ACC Chairman Justice Sultan Hossain Khan yesterday told The Daily Star, "The dealings concerning the country's gas fields and different international companies have often been charged with largescale corruption, and so we plan to scrutinise all the agreements relatng to gas exploration. Referring to the corruption in Chittagong seaport, he said, "We

are certainly going to investigate all sorts of corruption allegations regarding the port. Given the appallng rise in corruption, we are considering devising some immediate preventive measures." Justice Sultan said that Moniruzzaman Mian is going to Chittagong port next week to see for

himself the situation in the port, jetty,

and customs house. He will exam-

ine all records and documents, and

talk to the officials and others involved with the port to work out ways to check the trend of corrup-Sources in the ACC said though the chairman has given the go-ahead for the special drive in the Chittagong port, but in reality, it would not be easy. Rushing into actions without knowing thoroughly about the port and customs activities, especially the level of corrup-

help the drive, and eventually would bring no significant results, added the sources. Meanwhile, the commission has already contacted TIB and asked for a detailed report, said a source After going through the report, the commission will talk to the TIB authorities including those who were involved in preparing the report. Then it will talk to National

tion and how it takes place would not

Board of Revenue, as customs is one of its departments. TIB in its report revealed that traders bribe the Chittagong port and customs officials with more than Tk 800 crore a year. In addition to Tk 341 crore for the port itself, exporters and importers have to count Tk 460 crore as bribe for the customs

6 raiders of Babri

Alok Sinha said.

'In the ensuing gunbattle, six of them were killed," said Jyoti Sinha, director general of the Central

47 assault rifles, 15 hand-grenades, Sinha said. "This has been a successful operation as the police officials managed to have everything in control just within two hours," said Uttar Pradesh state home secretary

Television footage showed body parts strewn around the complex, where the Babri Mosque was razed triggering bloody riots that left 2,000 Indian intelligence agencies

a security siege in 2002 over reports of a possible attack. But the largest militant group in Kashmir, Hizbul Mujahedin, denied any role in Tuesday's assault and pointed the blame at Hindu hardlin-

slamic rebels fighting in northern

Kashmir, and the city was put under

handiwork of Hindu extremists to trigger anti-Muslim riots in India," a spokesman of the group told the Federal home ministry secretary

Vinod Duggal said no group had

claimed responsibility for the attack,

but linked the action to militants. "It's obvious that it is a militant group. Which one has done it we'll

reviewed the attack and put security forces on "sharp lookout" across the country to quard against possible violent sectarian protests, especially at religious places. "The attackers wanted to create

in the 16th century after they destroyed a temple marking the They have been arguing for a

of the demolished mosque on the sprawling 80-acre (26-hectare) compound, and the dispute is pending before the courts. The issue helped propel the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which was in power

before Singh's election last year, to

national prominence in the Hindu-

majority country.

Hindu nationalist supporters elsewhere to express concern over the attack and appeal for a peaceful Former home minister and current opposition leader Lal Krishna Advani, who headed a protest to the temple site in 1992

demolition, said Tuesday's attack was a surprise. "I have simply said that it is surprising and worrying that terrorists reached the complex with AK-47s," Advani told reporters. "We

that helped lead to the mosque

Indian government for the security lapse, saying the attack had been orchestrated by neighbouring Pakistan. "This is a strategy to destabilise India and has been planned by

(Pakistan President Pervez) Musharraf," said Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP or World Hindu Council) general secretary Praveen Togadia, one of the prime movers behind a campaign to rebuild the Ram temple on the site of the Babri

Pakistan since January last year, calling ongoing talks a sellout of The neighbours, who have been

been under way between Indian and

involved in a complicated "composite dialogue" process to address all points of dispute, including the prickly issue of Kashmir.

take initiatives to buy four aircraft --

He, however, told journalists

After a meeting with the state

(dervishes)?" he asked. State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Md Nasiruddin said, "I cannot sleep peacefully at

planes from. However, steps will have to be taken first to make "Though Biman has made some

be appointed by this month. The government will consider appointing ombudsman for other sectors if the

removed.

access to any official documents necessary for investigation.
The ombudsman can also issue

The ombudsman will receive complaints from the taxpayers and hear both the taxpayers and tax officials to resolve the disputes. If necessary, he or she can take help

If a taxpayer is found quilty of

the bill

new investment from Germany, as there are problems with regard to implementation of decisions German businesses are keen on investing in Bangladesh but shy

The ambassador said frequent

business delegation to Germany. The BGCCI president said the

tries, he added. The BGCCI president informed

activist Mithu. locals said. The BNP cadres (Mithu's friends)

When she came out at noon,

After taking her to an unknown

at one stage, they all raped her one

the drilling for a second well near the original production well that had

The family denied the offer but did not file any case for fear of harassment

Mithu and the alleged rapists

AL's reform FROM PAGE 16 participate in the next parliamentary "Awami League will not be able

without joining parliament. The JP chairman said any of the

"This is the last election for Jativa About his estranged wife

About the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), the JP chairman said he has no question about its activities as a

Hossain Babla, Khandokar

FROM PAGE 16 supplementary question of BNP lawmaker Moshiur Rahman.

Jatiya Party (Ershad) lawmaker

the Teletalk, he said the charges will be adjusted from time to time.

Secretary Misbah Uddin Siraj. The speakers demanded a

the company did not maintain the

announced.

caused another turmoil in the conduct of diplomacy. A new ideological divide was created with a religious bias and these developments have

In reply to a question, Rahman

visit to New Delhi comes in the wake of no forward movement in the proposal to construct an India-Myanmar gas pipeline through Bangladesh.

According to the original pro-

day afternoon. Bangladesh Biman's BG-048

Shahin Farhad said.

Bangladesh wants India to first address issues like reduction of officer of 200-member army rescue

> On Monday afternoon the civil aviation state minister expressed optimism about reopening the airport for international flights by

when the minibus transporting them every year for exporting and importto work was attacked in Baghdad's

Reserve Police Force. "One person, who possibly was a human bomb ... was blown to pieces." Three policemen were wounded. Police seized four gas masks, several rocket launchers seven AK-

by Hindu zealots in December 1992, dead across India. have often said the disputed Ayodhya site is a prime target for

"The incident seems to be the Current News Service in Kashmir.

find out soon," he said. India's federal security cabinet

dangerous situation," Indian Home Minister Shivraj Patil said. Hindu activists say the Ayodyha mosque was built by Muslim rulers birthplace of the Hindu deity Ram. Hindu temple to be built over the site

Senior BJP officials broke off from a scheduled meeting with nationwide protest.

have decided to protest this." A radical Hindu group blamed the

Hindu right-wingers vehemently oppose the peace process that has

Hindu values. to war three times since independence from Britain in 1947, are