# Govt skirts liability

Air Bangladesh, and quotations of \$1350 from five foreign airlines Emirates, Gulf, Saudi Arabian Airlines, Oatar Airways and Singapore Airlines.

In a last-minute supplementary agenda the civil aviation ministry on Monday last incorporated a proposal of hiking the previously set Hajj flight fare of \$950 to \$1250 so that Biman does not have to count losses and also to make it easier for the other airlines to agree to fly thousands of prospec-

The cabinet on August 15 fixed Hajj flight fare at \$950 that equals last year's fare amidst utmost displeasure from loss-incurring Biman and the civil aviation ministry, who blamed the government for paying no heed to price hike of jet fuel from only 26 cents a litre in 2004 to 56 cents a litre this

But the cabinet meeting, held at the Prime Minister's Office with the premier in the chair, yesterday rejected the proposal for a fare hike and told the ministry concerned that the government would provide subsidies to Biman had any loss incurred.

However, the issue of obtaining a good bargain in Hajj flight fares with other airlines for the overwhelming numbers of non-ballotee Hajjis is left  $with the pilgrims \, themselves. \\$ 

Under the circumstances, many will not be able to perform Hajj in January, 2006 due to the high airfare. The foreign airlines that will operate their scheduled flights on Dhaka-Jeddah route will charge according to their own fixed rates, said aviation sources.

Till last year Biman and Saudi Arabian Airlines used to split the load in flying the Hajjis from Bangladesh at the fare the cabinet used to fix. But with dwindling fleet size of Biman, the crunched national flag carrier expressed its inability to fly any more than 4,000 pilgrims this year comparing to over 23,000 it flew last year. Saudi Arabian Airlines also declined to fly pilgrims from Bangladesh at such a

### Safma confce Nov 10-11

UNB, Dhaka

A two-day conference of South Asian Free Media Association (Safma) will be held in Dhaka November 10-11.

Some 150 journalists from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and host Bangladesh are expected to attend the conference to be held at Lake Shore Hotel in Gulshan.

Grameen Bank Chairman Prof Muhammad Yunus will deliver a keynote speech on socio-economic and security aspects at the opening session on November 10 while Saarc foreign ministers will attend the concluding session on November 11. The conference will be split into four working sessions.

#### Democrats

progressing with its investigation.

Senate Republican leaders were livid about the tactic, which drew

President George W. Bush faced the fall-out from an indictment of a senior aide related to the handling of pre-war intelligence. "The United States Senate has

been hijacked by the Democratic leadership," Majority leader Bill Frist of Tennessee said. "Never have I been slapped in the face with such an affront to the leadership of this grand

But Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid of Nevada said what he called Republican stalling on the issue had been "a slap in the face for the American people.

Sen. John Rockefeller of West Virginia, top Intelligence Committee Democrat, said, "My colleagues and I have tried for two years to do our oversight work, and for two years we have been undermined, avoided, put

Democrats invoked a little used rule to temporarily shut down television cameras in the chamber, clear galleries of reporters, tourists and other onlookers, force removal of staff members and recording devices and stop work on legislation.

Apparently upset at yesterday's ecision not to hike the fare. State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin did not take any question from the media regarding the looming crisis in flying the pilgrims.

Nasir told The Daily Star earlier that if needed, as a last resort, he would suspend Biman's flights on other international routes including the loss-incurring Dhaka-New York

State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharraf Hossain Shahjahan told BBC radio last night that non-ballotee pilgrims would have to bargain on plane fares on their own through their travel agents and the government  $would\,not\,take\,their\,responsibility.$ 

Asked whether Biman would perate extra flights beyond its scheduled Dhaka-Jeddah flights for flying the pilgrims, Biman's acting Managing Director Mahmudur Rahman told this correspondent last night, "We'll wait for the civil aviation ministry's directives.

#### BSF kills 1

UNB, Kushtia

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) shot dead a Bangladeshi fisherman on Gaverpara border under Daulatput upazila of the district early yesterday. The victim was identified as

Zahidul Islam, 30, of Gayerpara vil-

The Indian border guards of Jalangi outpost in Murshidabad district opened fire on Zahidul while he was fishing in the river Padma at about 1:00am. Zahidul died on the spot. The BSF men took away the body.

Confirming the incident, local commander of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) said they have strongly protested the killing. The BSF did not return the body as of 6:00pm yester-

## Footpath

proportion to the increased prices of

Omar Faruk, who has been doing business on the footpath for the last six years and has set up his shop in Purana Paltan for this Eid, said sales have been quite low also because of a sharp rise in number of shops on the footpath.

With the elections ahead, the government does not want to anger the etty businessmen and has allowed vendors to sit on both sides of the footpath, he explained. "As a result customers have spread among many shops," he added Omar said in the past he used to

make sales of around Tk 15,000-20,000 during the last four-five days of Eid, but the sales have decreased this year by Tl 5.000-10.000.

Naimuddin, who sells children's clothes on the footpath in front of the Baitul Mukarram, thinks that many customers now prefer shopping in their home-towns, that has resulted in the fall of business on the city's footpaths.

Moreover, as the industrial units especially the garment factories are being shifted to the outskirts of the city and many new ones are also being built, markets have grown there over the last few years, which naturally attract oppers living in those places, he said.

Another footpath vendor Khabiruddin has a three feet by three feet shop on the footpath in front of the New Market, selling jeans trousers. He said his sales have fallen as rickshaws are not allowed to enter the road in front of the New Market.

'Our main clients are the lower come group people, who generally travel by rickshaws. Since rickshaws cannot enter the region, the shoppers go to other markets," he said.

Md Oli, another small businessman at Karwan Bazar selling readymade clothes, said most items sold this year on the city's footpaths were Chinese. "These items are relatively expensive so the profit margin has consequently come down," he said.

Again people's taste also seems to have changed, Oli pointed out. Youths of the lower income bracket, who were the loyal customers of these footpath shops, now prefer going to shopping malls and instead of buying two-three trousers from the footpaths they would rather buy one from an expensive store, he

# Poverty, economic

people that underlines the importance of poverty alleviation and enhanced intra-regional trade, which at present is less than four percent, he

Reaz Rahman, who is also the chief coordinator of the 13th Saarc summit, said the signing of four regional agreements regarding avoidance of double taxation, simplification of customs procedure, protection of promotion of investment and Saarc Arbitration Centre would be a major step towards the economic integration of the region.

He, however, said it is a long way to go for South Asian Economic Union that would require more regional cooperation in trade, investment, infrastructure, harmonisation of customs, single currency, and so on.

The Dhaka summit will also focus on implementation of social charter, additional protocol to stop financing of terrorism, disaster management with early warning system, strong Saarc secretariat and simplification of visa regime in the region, the foreign

affairs advisor said.

will emphasise taking up poverty reduction projects coordinating various funds and enhancing intraregional trade.

"It's true that not a single project on regional basis has been taken up in the last two decades," he said, adding, "There is a feeling among the Saarc member countries that the third decade should be a decade of implementation. Bangladesh always believes in

what unite us than what divide us" he said, adding that Bangladesh always believes in pragmatism and harmonisation and has been playing instrumental role to go ahead with Saarc for the development of the people of the region.

'South Asia is the place where we can do many positive things...we have the potentials and prospects, so time has come to take quick positive moves towards economic integration," he

Asked about whether the summi will discuss new membership and giving observer status to other countries, Reaz Rahman said there is no such provision or criteria in the Saaro

#### Sylhet village clashes leave 50 hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Over 50 people were injured in clashes between two neighbouring villagers in Dakshin Surma of the district over erecting an ornamental arch on the eve of the Eid-ul-Fitr yesterday morning.

Forty of them including 12 bullet-hit were admitted to the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital while condition of one Shahjahan Miah is stated to be critical.

The officer-in-charge and five other policemen of Dakshin Surma Police Station also sustained injuries, police

As it had been a tradition for years, the villagers of Boldi went to erect a welcome arch under the banner of Boldi Juba Kalyan Samity on its border at about 10:30am when some inhabitants from Bodikona asked them to stop heated words.

Following calls from their mosques to come forward to face the rival group, about 800 people from the two villages, who were armed with lethal weapons, locked in the clashes.

As Dakshin Surma police failed to control the situation, additional police force led by the police superintendent ioined them and dispersed the warring mobs by firing gunshots and tear gas There have been longstanding

disputes between the inhabitants of villages Boldi and Bodikona over their boundary, sources said.

### Dhaka joins new regional forum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh joined seven other countries to set up the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organisation (APSCO) in the Chinese capital Beijing.

According to an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) press release issued in Dhaka yesterday, Bangladesh signed the APSCO Convention on October 28 in Beijing's Great Hall to further expand cooperation among the Asia-Pacific countries in space technology and its application. The applications of space technol-

ogy will help the areas of disaster management, communication and information networking, environmental monitoring, natural resource accounting and enhance national capacities. Bangladesh ambassador to China

Ashfaqur Rahman signed the Convention with the Chinese Vice Premier Huang Ju presiding over the signing ceremony. Bangladesh's signing of the APSCO Convention follows a recent cabinet decision in this regard.

The Convention will come into effect when at least five signatory states deposit their instrument of ratification to the host China.

Following Bangladesh's signing, an interim council to oversee the work of the Convention was formed comprising the representatives of the eight signatory states

The eight signatory states are Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Iran, Mongolia, Pakistan, Peru and Thailand. Representatives from Argentina, Malaysia, Russia, Ukraine and the Philippines also attended the signing ceremony.

Meeting the representatives Huang Ju said China would work closely with related countries to contribute to the peaceful use of outer space.

China has always regarded space development as an important part of its national strategy.

Earlier this month, China successfully launched the manned spacecraft Shenzhou-6 which marked a major progress in China's space exploration.

After Bangladesh's signing the Convention, China is welcoming more Asia-Pacific nations to join the organisation and hopes the countries can take the APSCO as a platform to carry out space cooperation to make people benefit from space technology and its application

China, Thailand and Pakistan proposed to set up the APSCO in 1992.

#### Jail Killing

promulgating an ordinance that

The killing of four close aides to the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman came two months and 18 days after Bangabandhu along with most of his family members were assassinated by some disgruntled army men. On October 20 last year, a Dhaka

court awarded down death penalty to three, life imprisonment to 12 and acquitted five in the long-awaited verdict of the historic Jail Killing Case. The Awami League (AL) alleged that

the government interfered in the trial for the gruesome killing of the four national leaders who spearheaded the Bangladesh government in exile during the War of Independence. The AL will hoist the national and

party flags at half-mast and black flags atop party offices in Dhaka and elsewhere in observance of the Jail Killing Leaders and workers of the AL and

its front organisations will wear black The day's programmes also include

garlanding the portrait of Bangabandhu, placing wreaths at the graves of the national leaders at Banani Gravevard and offering fateha and organising milad and special prayers.

A discussion meeting will be held at the Engineers Institution in the city on November 12 with Leader of the Opposition and AL President Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

## Eid tomorrow

The 18-member National Moon Sighting Committee led by State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharref Hossain Shahjahan sits today at the conference room of Islamic Foundation Bangladesh at Baitul Mokarram National Mosque to confirm the moon

If the moon is sighted, the committee will declare the Eid; otherwise, the festival will be celebrated across the country on Saturday. The district-level moon-sighting

committees will inform the national committee if the moon is sighted anywhere in the country.

district will also hold meetings at the same time at their district headquarters The committee will also collect information from the meteorological

Thousands of people have already left Dhaka to celebrate the Eid with relatives and near and dear ones. The busy and crowded city has already taken a deserted look as the government and private offices would remain closed from today. The government offices will open on Monday after a four-day Eid

department for confirming the moon

The main Eid congregation will be held at Jatiya Eidgah on the High Court premises in the morning of the Eid day.

President Iajuddin Ahmed and senior ministers, government high-ups and the elite will say their prayer at the Jatiya Eidgah. Several Eid congregations will be held at the Baitul Mokarram National Mosque from the morning.

Besides, more Eid congregations would be held at all major mosques, Eidgahs and open spaces in the city. The main Eid congregation in Sylhet

Division will be held at the historic Shahi Eidgah at 9:00am and in Barisal Division at Hemaet Uddin Eidgah Maidan. Meanwhile, thousands of people in different small areas of the country, particularly in Chandpur, Barisal

Patuakhali and Barguna celebrated the

More than 30,000 people of 10,000 families observed the Eid yesterday and said Eid prayers at over 80 congregations, reports Our Barisal

They followed the Saudi Arabian lunar calendar in celebrating the Eid and claimed they observe all religious festivals in accordance with the Saudi calendar at the directions of their

#### Dhaka turns

November 14 due to Saarc Summit Dhaka University have added seven more days from November 8 to 14 to its vacation and postponed all scheduled examinations during the period Dhaka Notre Dame College Vigarunnisa Noon School and College, and Holy Cross School and College extended their holidays till November "I will stay at our village home with

my siblings and my mother at Matlab in Chandpur till November 14 and celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr with my kith and kin," said Kaniz Farzana Onna, a student of class nine of Kishalay Girl's School and College at Mohammadpur as she was preparing to leave Dhaka with her parents at Sadarghat Launch Terminal yesterday. She also said her father will however have to return to the city alone after Eid.

Businessmen said the long vacation will have a negative impact on the country's economy and they expect that their business will not run on top gear until November 15.

Meanwhile, the government has decided to close down Karwan Bazar. the capital's largest wholesale kitchen market, for four days from November 10 to 13 as part of the security measure

It has also tightened security at all entry points to the capital ahead of the summit, which will certainly add to the slow down of the capital.

Some however, welcome the change of scene in Dhaka as traffic jam will vanish for a couple of weeks and one may move from one place to another with relative ease even if for a short period of time.

Every year about five million people depart the capital to celebrate Eid with their families at their village

## Manmohan to discuss

that country is just a few kilometres from

Agartala, he explained. If Bangladesh allows the transit and transshipment facility for the northeastern states, it (Bangladesh) itself will be benefited in many ways, Sarkar said.

The state government also approached Singh to sanction another alternative national highway from Sabroom to Kukital in Assam through West Dhalai and North Tripura districts. If the existing Assam-Agartala

national highway was made four lanes as announced by Singh and the alternative national highway sanctioned the state, there would be a real gateway for Southeast Asia, Sarkar pointed out. Singh said in Agartala the improved

air, rail, road and telecommunications connectivity between northeastern region of India and Southeast Asia would revive old trade routes to enable the creativity of the people of this region and find greater expression. The prime minister said, "Our

northeastern states are India's gateway

to Southeast Asia and this is a reality not just in terms of physical connectivity, but also in terms of economic outreach and cultural affinities." The development of the northeast region and its integration with the larger regional processes were the prime determining factors of India's engage-

ment with regional cooperation, Singh

He further said this region would derive benefit from Saarc, Bay of Bengal

Cooperation, and Association of South **East Asian nations** 

India's 'Look East' policy, initiated by the Congress government in the early 1990s, had brought India closure to its eastern neighbours, he added.

Earlier, the 14-party leaders distrib-"A month later, I will be in Kuala Lumpur to participate in the East Asian Summit and the early completion of the South Asia Free Trade Agreement process and the India-Asean FTA will create new trading and investment opportunities, while the launch of Bimstec has brought India closure to Myanmar and Thailand," he pointed 8-5kg of rice is being given to them instead of 10-kg.

### Tata project

Sources close to the Tata Group said it will not wait beyond December for concluding the talks and signing an agreement since, they believe, any dilly-dally will hamper the prospect of the projects in various ways.

However, at the current stage of bargaining between the two sides, the BoI has decided to engage the country's leading economists to evaluate the costs and benefits of the four Tata projects for the country.

A consultant of the Asian Development Bank will also prepare an independent report styled "Economic Impact Assessment Study' on behalf of the Bangladesh side.

# Eid festivity eludes

labourers unemployed and, thus, victims of food scarcity. "As it is the order of Allah, we have been fasting during the Ramadan and as it is our lot, we will have to do the same on the Eid day too," said Abdul Khalegue of village Ramprasad of Thethrai union in Kurigram district.

maidan on the day, nothing else," Zabber, 40, of Panjar Bhanga in Kounia upazila sighed. "We have not had anything since Sunday night," he said on Monday

"For five years, Eid to us has been

only saying prayers at the eidgah

noon, pointing at his children Sabuj and Sayema. "I went to Rangpur this morning in search of work but returned a while ago not finding any. Allah knows how my family members will be fed today," he

Elderly Nazir Hossain of Kurshamari of Teesta union in Lalmonirhat said Eid-ul-Fitr and monga has been coinciding for five years and so, hundreds of his likes in the village remained cheerless on the Eid days and this year it would not be

"My wife wanted a sari before the Eid but I failed to get money to buy one," said Nazir. Most of the villagers of Moubhasa

Gajghanta, Mornea and adjoining unions over char areas along the Teesta under Gangachara upazila remain half-fed and even starved, in absence of farm work throughout the district. "The chairman and members of our

union parisad are at once deaf and

blind. They can neither see our misery

nor hear our appeal for food assis-

village said, adding, "We were in the queue from morning to midnight to collect rice at subsidised rate but the chairman did not issue a slip for me."

The district administration records show that 10 kg of rice was given twice to each of about eight lakh people of 333 unions and 12 municipalities in Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Rangpur, Nilphamari, and Gaibandha districts during September and October under the Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) programme and 10 kg more awaits distribution ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr.

But many poor people in the districts alleged that they did not get any relief from the government or any other organisations. There are also allegations of misap-

propriation of relief food.

It is impossible to bring all the extreme poor under government's safety net programme. Those who were not listed for VGF assistance might allege that they did not get any assistance," Deputy Commissioner of Rangpur Nazrul Islam Khan said. We selected only need-based 2,200

nowhere except Milonpur union in

ted to the Court of Chief Metropolitan very poor families out of 4,000 on an average in every union. Rest of the poor families are getting assistance from some other government programmes,' Regarding misappropriation of relief goods, the DC said that he visited many unions in the district but

Mithapukur did he find any irregulartwo places. The Detective Branch of Dhaka Milonpur Union Parishad Chairman Abdul Hakim is now in jail in Metropolitan Police submitted the two connection with misappropriation of charge sheets on completion of investi-VGF rice," he said.

### Cabinet okays 2 draft Saarc agreements

**UNB,** Dhaka

The Cabinet vesterday endorsed two draft agreements on avoidance of double taxation in South Asian countries and on Saarc arbitration council.

With Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in the chair, a meeting of the cabinet also approved a proposal for receiving the Saarc Award 2004, which was conferred on late president Ziaur Rahman posthumously, in recognition of his contributions to promote peace, progress and regional cooperation under an institutional framework.

Besides, the cabinet approved in principle the Public Procurement Act 2005 with some amendments to make the public procurement process more transparent.

The proposed 'Saarc Limited Multilateral Treaty on Avoidance of Double Taxation' and the 'Agreement for Establishment of Saarc Arbitration Council' are among four deals going to be struck at the forthcoming sum-

The accords are aimed at boosting intra-regional trade and investment by easing tariff and customs proce $dures\, and\, resolving\, other\, problems.$ 

#### 14-party

FROM PAGE 1

leaders told journalists after visiting the Monga-affected Nohali Union in Gangachara unazila vesterday.

Addressing a press conference at Rangpur Circuit House, the 14-party leaders demanded the opening of a temporary office of disaster and relief ministry in the monga-stricken region by appointing a secretary-level official in aid of the destitute.

Sengupta read out a written statement on behalf of the opposition combine, painting a grim picture of the penury. Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain, Nazma Rahman, Fazle

Hossain Badsha, HM Ashiqur Rahman

Awami League leader Suranjit

and Gonotantri Party President M Afzal attended the press conference. The opposition parties demanded expulsion of Deputy Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Asadul Habib Dulu from the council of ministers for allegedly handing out money to his party men by selling out

reliefgoods. They also urged the prime minister to take lawful actions against the deputy minister and issue a statement from her office in this regard.

uted 4 metric tons of rice among the monga-hit people in Nohali Union. where people are worst affected. Urging the government to double the number of VGF cards and distribute 15-kg of rice instead of 10-kg per card, they said few VGF cards have been given to the affected people and

They demanded distribution of fertilisers and crop seeds among the flood-affected farmers and loans on easy terms among the people whose

The opposition alliance also demanded a special allocation for the monga-hit areas

Apart from these immediate measures, they also asked the government to take short-term and long-term plans for a permanent solution to this desperate situation of poverty.

#### Accused held

FROM PAGE 16

Satkhira Correspondent Belal along with 25 others met JMB chief Shaikh Abdur Rahman at a mosque of Lamgal Jhhara in Kalaroa upazila in 2001 and joined JMB, the

policesaid The police quoting Belal said he along with others had received training at Akhrakhola in sadar upazila before carrying out the August 17 blasts in

Satkhira Police have so far arrested seven

accused in the case. BDNEWS reports: Police yesterday submitted chargesheet at the Speedy Trial Tribunal, accusing four people, including JMB chief Abdur Rahman. in a case regarding the August 17 bomb blasts in six places of Netrokona.

The other accused are Kausar Alam Sumon, 22, Kausar Ahmed alias Yunis Ali, 28, and Amanullah Akand alias Sanaullah. 25. Police already arrested Sumon and Sanaullah. Investigation officer of the case

Usman Ali submitted the chargesheet. The IO said Abdur Rahman has been made the main accused according to the confessional statement of Sumon. Sumon confessed that they had

blasted the bombs at six places, includ-

ing judge court. DB office and super

market in Netrakona, under the directives of Abdur Rahman. UNB adds: Police yesterday submitted two charge sheets against 13 JMB cadres involved in blasts in the capital on August 17.

Both the charge sheets were submit-

Magistrate, Dhaka, accusing the JMB men of detonating bombs at Khilkhet Bridge and Paltan. Of the accused, three -- Abdur Rahman Masud alias Ujjal, Nurul Islam alias Jubair and Faisal Ahmed -- are in

custody, while the rest at large. The three reportedly confessed to their involvement in the blasts at the

six live bombs and a huge amount of

## Hosts take care

office vesterday afternoon. Reaz Rahman confirmed that several thousand security personnel will cordon off all the 12 summit venues as part of the security net, but he didn't give the actual figure of the

security forces that would be

deployed A maximum security surveillance has also been planned along the Bangladesh-India border to prevent illegal intrusion ahead of the November 12-13 meet.

BDR and Border Security Force (BSF) of India will coordinate joint patrolling on the border, BDR sources said, adding that a "red alert" is in place on Bangladesh's borders with India and Myanmar, so that "no insurgent or terrorist can enter or flee the country. "We had already been implement-

ing tight security all over the country for the two most important events --Eid and Saarc summit, but the blasts in New Delhi have kept us on our toes," said a senior official of the home The foreign affairs adviser also said the government has completed all preparations and brought the entire

surveillance for ensuring safety and security of the South Asian leaders and other delegates All the six Saarc leaders are due to arrive in Dhaka by November 11 to attend the summit and all of them will

capital city under strong security

stay till November 13, Rahman said. The heads of state and government of Bhutan, Nepal and the Maldives have so far confirmed to come with their spouses but the prime ministers of India and Pakistan have not yet confirmed it. Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga will come

The opening ceremony will take

place at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre (BCFCC). BCFCC will also host a cultural evening, banquet and a photo exhibition on the previous Saarc

summits on the first day of the sum-The concluding session will be held at the International Conference

Also on November 12, all the Saarc eaders -- Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Maldives President Mamoon Abdul Gayoom, Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, Sri Lankan President Chandrika Bandarnaike Kumaratunga, King of Nepal Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev and Bhutanese Prime Minister Lyonpo Sangay Ngedu will call on President

Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban. The South Asian leaders will also visit the National Mausoleum at Savar to pay homage to the Liberation War martyrs and the mazar of slain president Ziaur Rahman, dreamer of Saarc.

A permanent plaque containing the excerpt of Zia's first letter to the South Asian leaders mooting the idea of South Asian regional cooperation will be unveiled jointly by the Saarc leaders. Later, it will be set up permanently at the Zia Smrity Jadughar (Zia Memorial Museum) being constructed adjacent to his mazar.

The Saarc leaders will meet for retreat at the State Guesthouse Jamuna where they will hold informal discussions on important Saarc issues. A separate programme for the spouses of the Saarc leaders has been anned at the State Guesthouse

ICC after the concluding session that will adopt the Dhaka Declaration

## Parcelled JMB

Dhaka following an instruction from the

home ministry, sources said. Sylhet Kotwali police also picked up three employees of the courier service vesterday to quiz them about the parcel. The detainees are Mosharraf Hossain, manager, Amzad Hossain and Imran Ahmed, both booking clerks.

Tipped off from Sylhet, Detective

Branch of police in Dhaka along with Rajshahi Metropolitan Police lunched the raid around 11:30am. The explosives were hidden under a toy rickshaw sent by Habib bin Mahbub of Education and Relief Society,

bin Sobhan Rahman, SCS in Rajshahi. The consignment mentioned four phone numbers -- three mobile and one T&T land-phone -- of the sender and the recipient, but none of the numbers responded when called.

Kudratullah Market in Sylhet to Raihan

The land phone number was located at Naodapara from where militant linchpin Dr Asadullah Al Galib operated his outfit Ahle Hadith Andolan, Bangladesh. "The seized materials are sufficient to manufacture several hundred bombs, similar to those used by the militants in

explosives were hidden perfectly under the toy rickshaw, he added. Asked why the courier service manager was arrested, he said: "The consignment has incomplete addresses. Booking a parcel with incomplete

the recent blasts," said RMP

Commissioner Naveem Ahmad. The

addresses is unlawful." The parcel reached Raishahi on October 29, but the recipient did not come to receive it. "For three days the parcel was kept carelessly at the office," said AK Azad, assistant general manager

"We asked the police to wait for the recipient," he said. "But they picked up three of our staff." Police suspect someone belonging to Ahle Hadith Jubo Shangha (AHJS) was

of the courier service.

office at Naodapara after they found the land phone number of AHJS head office, written on the consignment. The officer-in-charge of Boalia Police Station told reporters the AHJS

had surrendered the phone number a

the recipient of the consignment of

RMP senior officials raided AHJS

few months ago. "We are investigating the matter," he said. The AHJS is the youth wing of Dr Galib's Ahle Hadith Andolan, Bangladesh, which is believed to be involved in militant activities in the

explosives.

In the leaflet found in the consignment, the JMB advised all people, government and non-government officials to lead their life according to the teachings of Islam. It asked the local and foreign NGOs, banks and insurance companies to stop anti-sharia activities.

"If foreign NGOs, banks, and all

other foreign financial institutes do not stop anti-sharia activities and foreign nationals of the institutions do not leave the country within 15 days, they will have to pay the price," says the leaflet. All bureaucrats, judges and all other government officials of the country were

rule of Allah in the country. "Stay away from harassing the soldiers of Allah (militants), otherwise stern action will be taken against the people concerned," says the leaflet

asked in the leaflet to help "establish the

The JMB also thanked the Islamic scholars and Muslims who are facing harassment, saying all members of JMB BOMB RECOVERED IN CHT Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) recovered

New Saarc Chairperson Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will address a post-summit press conference at the

#### bomb-making materials in Bandarban and Cox's Bazar on Tuesday night, according to reports from our correspondents in Chittagong and

Bandarban.

potash alum.

three large size bombs, one pot bomb, two patrol bombs, electric cables, three lighter-gas pots, one scissors, one pliers, two pencil batteries, one 1.5-volt large battery, 13 empty cans, 100 grams of brown powder, 100 grams of sulphur, 100 grams of potash and 300 grams of

Rab sources said they recovered

Each of the seized bombs weighs 1.5

kg to 5 kg. At least 10 to 12 bombs could

be made by the recovered bomb making-materials, Rab officials said. Each bomb has additional electric cable connections that make those detonable by a remote control device. Intelligence sources in Chittagong believe these bombs were part of 50

such bombs manufactured jointly by

tribal criminals and Rohingya insur-

gents, and brought to carry out subversive activities in the country ahead of the Fid and the Saarc summit They also found a two-page letter written in tribal language. According to the letter, 50 powerful bombs have beer manufactured as part of the plan and

the gangs were paid Tk 1 lakh for manufacturing the bombs, sources said. The Rab officials in Chittagong yesterday sent urgent message to the higher authorities about the probable danger the remaining 44 bombs may

"Twelve people were assigned to supervise the manufacturing of the bombs. Of them, four are Rohingya rebels in Myanmar and the rest tribal criminals from Bandarban. They were supposed to take the bombs to Khagrachhari and then to different parts of the country," Rab sources said quot-

A six-member team of Rab-7 led by

The Rab officials traced the identity

of the 12 people mentioned in the letter

Lt Shamim raided in the remote hilly

regions of Lama upazila in Bandarban and Chakoria in Cox's Bazar in the early hours yesterday and made the seizure in an abandoned state. Sensing the presence of the Rab nembers, the criminals fled the scene.

but refused to disclose their names for the sake of further investigation. "We suspect these bombs are manufactured to carry a massive act of sabotage in the country," Lt Col Hasinur Rahman, chief of Rab, Chittagong, told

He said the explosives unit of Bangladesh Army was asked to examine the bombs, and the decision to defuse those will be taken today.

#### Mortar shells

FROM PAGE 16 Bazar near Jafranpara of Thanchi

journalists.

shells from an abandoned place on a But they could not arrest anyone in this connection. In another drive, personnel of Bangladesh Army arrested two indigenous persons from Rayangchhari

Bazar. They also recovered two locally

made guns along with 14 rounds of

bullets and a receipt for extorted

upazila at 11:00pm on Tuesday and

recovered two three-inch long mortar

money. The arrested two, Mong kang Ching, 23 and U Ka Mong admitted to extorting money from people at gunpoint.

Meanwhile, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) also recovered six powerful bombs from Chakria hill yesterday. Reliable sources said the recovered

bomb might have been for use by extremist Rohinga groups.

## Replying to a question, he said Bangladesh as the next chair of Saarc

off, and vilified by the other side."