FROM PAGE 1 case and submit the report by April 15--the scheduled date for the next hearing of the case. In the order, the court said further

investigation is required as the time demands for it and to find out the real culprits. The court observed that the

previous two IOs did not investigate deep into the case or mention anything about who brought the firearms, the place of shipment and their destinations.

The order was made after Assistant Public Prosecutor (APP) Humayun Kabir Russell filed an appeal on November 19 last year, saying it could not be ruled out that the weapons and ammunition came from a ship at the outer anchorage of Chittagong port and then loaded on vessels.

It is important to know the names of all the vessels that were at the outer anchorage of the port at that time, their import manifests and Onward Customs Declaration they made in Singapore, the APP said.

been looked into and the speed of the 2,000 grenades and 3 lakh bullets. vessels should have been figured out to know how much time they took to reach the outer anchorage of Chittagong port from Singapore.

A number of the hauled arms and ammunition went missing from the custody of the law enforcers. Two police sergeants were held in this connection and three of the missing firearms were recovered, said the APP in the appeal.

The previous two IOs made no investigation into these things, he observed.

Public Prosecutor (PP) Ahsanul Haq Hena said the previous two IOs did not investigate the case properly.

"The then government also cannot ignore their responsibility since the firearms and ammunition were offloaded on a restricted area of Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Ltd jetty, which is under the control of the Ministry of Industries," said the PP while talking to The Daily Star yester-

Six sub-machine guns (SMGs) and 28 grenades went missing from police custody. Later, Rapid Action Battalion personnel held police sergeants Alauddin and Helaluddin to recover three of the missing SMGs from Feni and Barguna.

But, the investigation report did not mention anything about these, said the PP.

Two cases were filed with Karnaphuli Police Station following the recovery of the arms and ammunition while being offloaded from two engine boats on the Karnaphuli.

One of the cases was lodged under section 25/B of the Special Powers Act for smuggling arms and the other under section 19(ka) of the Arms Act.

The CID started investigating the cases on April 26 after Officer-incharge of Karnaphuli Police Station and IO Ahadur Rahman was

### Fresh fighting clashes along the front lines in the

Five government soldiers were also reported killed.

north of the island on Saturday and

According to the defence ministry, 1,168 rebels and 62 government

soldiers and police have been killed so far this year. Casualty figures given by the

government cannot be independently verified as journalists and human rights workers are not allowed to enter the battle zone.

The Sri Lankan government last month officially pulled out of a defunct truce with the rebels, who have fought for more than three decades for an independent ethnic homeland in the Sinhalesemajority island.

The conflict has claimed tens of thousands of lives.

Sheikh Helal

dropped for his controversial investi-

Kabir Uddin Ahmed, assistant superintendent of police for CID Chittagong region, submitted the charge sheet on June 11, 2004, accusing 39 people in the arms case.

The Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court framed the charges on October 24.

Thirty-six of the 39 accused have meanwhile been released on bail while Hafizur Rahman alias Hafiz, Deen Mohammad and Firoz Ahmed are behind bars.

Hafiz is one of the prime accused in the case while Deen Mohammad, owner of Friends Syndicate of the Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Ltd jetty, and Firoz Ahmed, owner of a trawler used for the smuggling, were Hafiz's close aides. However, the home ministry did

not take any confessional statement from Hafiz under 164 at that time.

In the country's largest arms haul, the joint forces seized 10 truckloads of 10,000 arms, including SMGs, AK47 assault rifles, rocket propelled Logs of the vessels should have grenades (RPG) and RPG launchers,

The arms and ammunition included 690 7.62mm SMG T-56-1 and 2,792 magazines for them, 600 7.62mm SMG T-56-2 and 2,400 magazines, 400 9mm automatic carbines and 800 magazines, 100 Tommy Guns and 400 magazines, 150 40mm T-69 RPG launchers and 840 RPGs, 2,000 launching tubes (Ugo rifles), 150 aiming devices for the RPG launchers, 4,00,000 7.25x25 ball pistol bullets, 7,39,680 bullets for T-56 pistols, and 25,020 NV grenades.

A number of political bigwigs of the then ruling BNP were then suspected of having links with the arms

### Trains ordered

FROM PAGE 16 bridge were wobbly or loosened.

Earlier, in the first week of January 2008, a report submitted by Tofazzal Hossain, Wahiduzzaman, Abul Kalam Azad, all assistant directors of the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Authority, and Nur Sadique of Marga Net One Ltd, the operation and maintenance operator of the bridge, noted that vibrations caused by trains and heavily loaded

ment of the cracks. Following the report, two engineers of the bridge authority Liakat Ali, executive engineer, and Abu Sufian, superintendent engineer -- visited the site on January 23. They also expressed similar views on the matter.

vehicles have led to the develop-

The government is planning to appoint consultants by the end of this month to identify the actual reasons behind the cracks and other defects. The government would repair the bridge as per recommendations of the consul-

The government is also considering taking legal steps against Hyundai Engineering & Construction Co Ltd, the South Korean contractor that built the bridge

Dr Muhammad Mahbubur Rahman, the communications secretary, told journalists at his office on Monday that the issue of the bridge was discussed at a recent board meting of the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Authority.

"We are thinking about taking legal steps against the construction firm that constructed the bridge and we are consulting the law ministry to see if legal steps can be

taken," he added. Sources at the bridge authority said Hyundai has claimed that the design and the construction of the bridge had no flaws and therefore, they would not bear the responsibility for the cracks that developed on the bridge.

# Another Titas tycoon

FROM PAGE 1

the job in 1997.

Replying to a query, he said he made some properties through the profits from his import business in 10 years. He also supplies in-flight utilities to Bangladesh Biman, he

According to the task force investigation, Emdad has a sixstorey building on 7 kathas of land at Banani in the name of his wife Sajedatul Mowla, a six-storey building on 5 kathas of land and a one-storey building on 3 kathas of land at Pallabi, and 15 kathas of land at Bashundhara.

He also owns a multi-storey factory for manufacturing food and 4 bighas of lowland at Savar, and land worth Tk 2.80 crore at Banani. He has a deposit of Tk 8 crore with the VIP Road branch of Oriental Bank and Protirakkha Sanchay Patra (defence savings certificate) worth Tk 1.35 crore at the Dhanmondi branch of

Standard Chartered Bank Emdad and his wife have a huge amount of money in savings and current accounts with Standard Chartered Bank, while Emdad has a wealth worth Tk 2,100 crore. deposit of \$1.37 lakh (equivalent to

defence savings certificates now.

The investigation found that Emdad also has three latest model cars and he went abroad around 50 times during the last seven years.

Emdad told The Daily Star that he could not complete the construction of the six-storey building at Banani because of lack of money while his father-in-law and his brothers own the six-storey building at Pallabi.

He also said he does not own the one-storey building at Pallabi while 15 kathas of land at Bashundhara has already been sold out.

On the food-manufacturing factory at Savar, he said, "The project is funded by Janata Bank."

Emdad, however, admitted his ownership of 80 kathas of land at Savar and said he bought it at a low price "for the next generation".

He said he visited his two brothers in London only five-six times. He has two cars--one for the Janata Bank project and another is seven years old, he added. Earlier, the task force found

Titas Gas sales assistant Abdul Kadir Mollah to be the owner of

A total of 135 staff of Titas Gas Tk 93,16,000) at HSBC Bank, task have admitted their involvement in corruption. Of them 124 have Emdad, however, denied having refunded their illegally earned properties worth over Tk 350

FROM PAGE 1 Anti-Corruption Commission

HELALJAILED Judge Mohammad Shafiul Azam o Special Tribunal-12 gave the jail sentences to Helal and his assistant private secretary (APS) Munshi Saiduzzaman in their absence.

The court also fined the two Tk 1 lakh each, defaulting on which will earn them additional six months in jail. The punishment will be effective from the day of their arrest or surrender, the court said.

The judge acquitted Shaheen Chaklader, Khorshed Alam Prokash and AHM Kamal Hossain on the charges.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence completed their arguments and the court recorded statements of 13 prosecution witnesses.

According to the prosecution, construction firm Reza Construction LtdwonaTk8.28 work order at Roads and Highways Department on May 8 in 2000. Aide Saiduzzaman demanded Tk 2 crore from the firm on Helal's orders, threatening that the work order would otherwise be cancelled.

The firm later paid Helal and his APS Tk 1,02,40,000 in cash and by cheque on different dates from 2000 through 2006, the case statement

Mohammad Mamtaz Uddin filed the case with Shahbagh Police Station on May 21 last year. The investigation officer pressed charges against five people on July 3.

The former lawmaker is implicated in two more criminal cases. CASEAGAINSTZAHID

Judge Mohammad Azizul Haq at Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court issued arrest warrants against Zahid, his wife and Mujahid after scrutinising the case docket and other relevant documents.

On February 7, Helal Uddin Sharif, assistant director of Anti-Corruption Commission and investigation officer of the case, submitted charge sheet against the three at Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka, showing 23 people as prosecution witnesses.

The IO prayed for warrants for their arrest and attachment of their property as they have been in hiding since the case was filed.

ACC Assistant Director Nasiruddin lodged the case with Ramna Police Station on October 3 last year, alleging that Zahid hid information on over Tk 2.12 crore. His wife Rifat and lawyer Mujahid were accused of helping him in the

The court fixed tomorrow for next hearing of the case.

Khulna mayor

FROM PAGE 16 higher position.

Taher has since been in hiding.

Tayebur, who was arrested in Dhaka on November 2 last year, has already given confessional statement in the case under Section 164 of Criminal Procedure Code

### Gen Moeen

time and the armed forces will have to play an important role in reaching the goal," he said.

Addressing as chief guest the 6th certificate-awarding ceremony of the Military Institute of Science and Technology (MIST) at Mirpur Cantonment, General Moeen urged the certificate recipients to use their intellectual attainments for development of the country with patriotism, honesty and sincerity.

A total of 176 students, including 51 military officers, were given certificates. Of them, 45 students from civil engineering department, 35 from computer science and engineering Department, 43 from electrical, electronics and communications engineering department, 26 from mechanical engineering were awarded BSc in Engineering, while 27 students from management studies department were awarded MBA degree.

Among others, Chief of Naval Staff Vice-Admiral Sarwar Jahan Nizam, Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal SM Ziaur Rahman, Principal Staff Officer of the Armed Forces Division Lt Gen Masud Uddin Chowdhury, Commandant of MIST, senior military and civil officials were present.

### CA writes

FROM PAGE 1

global economic leadership to the problems confronted by the

"The chief adviser asked for market access benefits for all products from LDCs without discrimination," Iftekhar said, adding that the CA had also called for liberalisation of movement of people across boundaries.

Fakhruddin asked for firm commitments on special and differential treatment for LDCs at the ongoing Doha round of talks.

The chief adviser also laid stress on environmental vulnerability of most LDCs due to global warming and climate change and vulnerability to shocks from global economic downturns. The G8 comprises the United

States, Russia, Japan, Britain,

Canada.

France, Germany, Italy, and

## Sustainable democracy

FROM PAGE 16

and the separation of judiciary from the executive has been accomplished as per directive of the constitution.

Preparation of voter list with photograph is being implemented smoothly under the supervision of the recast Election Commission, he mentioned.

The head of the caretaker government gave a four-point directive to all members of Ansar and Village Defence Party (VDP) for playing a more vibrant and effective role in building up the coun-

As per the directives, Ansar-VDP will have to be more sincere in preventing crimes and ensuring security in economic activities at the grassroots level, as they have scope and opportunity to make more contributions to establishing good governance at grassroots level and establishing reliable and cordial relations with the people and the government.

The directives also include ensuring security of public life through strengthening the local government and building up the Ansar-VDP as a well-knit force for alleviating poverty, expansion of social security network and intensifying efforts to involve members of Ansar-VDP more effectively in facing disaster.

The CA said all citizens of the country will have to make best efforts from their respective position to turn the beloved motherland into a modern and developed country.

He praised the activities of Ansar, Battalion Ansar and VDP in maintaining law and order, curbing crimes and terrorism, and contributing in socioeconomic development. Presently, about 30,000 Ansars

are playing courageous role for ensuring security of life and property at airports, seaports, industries and other important establishments, he said. Through this, he added, it was possible to ensure suitable envi-

ronment for production and

investment, which is playing a

positive role in keeping the wheels of economy running. The CA expressed his firm belief that over 43 lakh trained male and female members of VDP can launch revolution in the field of socioeconomic development in 80,000 villages of Bangladesh.

He mentioned the courageous role of the members of Ansar Battalion in performing their responsibilities with army in Chittagong Hill Tracts for protecting the country's sovereignty and

integrity. Before addressing the function, the CA distributed Bangladesh Ansar Padak (award), Rashtrapati (president) Ansar Padak Bangladesh VDP Padak and Rashtrapati VDP Padak among Ansars and VDP members for their heroic role in curbing terrorism, crimes and in maintaining law and order as well as outstanding contributions to socioeconomic development.

Earlier, a parade by members of Battalion Ansars, general Ansars, VDP and Town Defence Party, both male and female members, gave a guard of honour to the CA at the parade ground. He inspected the parade from on board an open

The joint parade in a splendid march past gave salute to the CA who took salute from a decorated podium.

Later, the CA witnessed a colorful cultural event presented by the male and female members of Ansars and VDP on the Academy premises.

Earlier, on arrival at the venue, Home Affairs Adviser Maj Gen (retd) MA Matin and DG Ansar-VDP Mai Gen Abdul Hafiz received

Rank and file of Ansar-VDP, distinguished personalities and senior civil and military officials were present at the function.

### Arms, ammo

FROM PAGE 16

loading gun, a locally-made single barrel breech loading gun, a grenade, SMG magazines and at least 2,000 bullets of different types of firearms at the den before destroy-

Meanwhile, another army team from Dighinala raided Kamukkapara of Dighinala upazila in Khagrachhari and recovered two foreign-made single barrel breech loading gun, a grenade, 100 bullets and some documents, sources

The criminals managed to flee before the army raided the place, they said adding that the team destroyed the den.

# Illegal plot allotment

detained former premier Khaleda Zia's petition to produce her before the court in connection with the Niko graft case.

Earlier on February 7, the court passed the same order after defence lawyers submitted a petition for Khaleda's appearance before the court in connection with the Gatco graft case.

ABBAS-LOBI CASE

ACC Deputy Director Afzal Hossain, who is also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, submitted the charge sheet against them to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, showing 23 people as prosecution witnesses.

The other accused in the charge sheet is senior special assistant secretary of establishment ministry, now officer on special duty (OSD),

Mahfuzul Islam. The IO prayed for issuance of arrest warrant against Mahfuz and the order to attach his property as he has been absconding since the case

was filed against him. ACC Deputy Director Syed Iqbal Hossain filed the case with Shahbagh Police Station against Abbas, Lobi,

and Mahfuz on July 15 last year. In the case statement, the trio was accused of illegally allotting an industrial plot in collusion with each other in Tejgaon Industrial Area for a business organisation, Pacific Chemicals Ltd, owned by Lobi. It was mentioned that the accused exercised their influence in allotting the 19.44 katha plot ignoring governmentrules.

Without having no-objection certificates from the Board of Investment and the Department of Environment, the plot was allotted as an industrial plot.

NIKO CASE Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Golam Rabbani placed the petition in the case file but did not give any order.

The lawyers appealed to the court to pass an order so that Khaleda is produced before the court since it was the scheduled court day (monthly court day during a case investigation) of the case. However, the court asked the investigation officer (IO) of the case to submit the probe report by March 12.

In the petition submitted yesterday, defence lawyers said Khaleda was arrested on September 3 last year in Gatco graft case and shown arrested in Niko graft case on December 30 and since then she was not produced before the court. There is no provision in the

detain any person in jail custody for a meet. long time, they said. The prosecution argued that investigation into the case is going on and it is not a mandatory provision to produce any detained person before the court on scheduled court dates.

Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) to

Moreover, there is a security matter to be considered when producing a VIP before the court. The case was filed with Tejgaon

Police Station against former prime

minister Khaleda Zia and five others

on charges of causing huge financial losses to the state by awarding the gas exploration work to the Canadian company The other accuse in the case are former law minister Moudud Ahmed, former state minister for energy AKM Mosharraf Hossain, former energy secretary Towfiq-e-

energy secretary Khandaker Shahidul Islam, and Kashem Sharif, vice president (South Asia) of Niko Resources Bangladesh Ltd. Earlier, detained Moudud, Mosharraf, Giasuddin Al Mamun and detained former Dhaka Club

Elahi Chowdhury, former acting

president Selim Bhuiyan were shown arrested in the case. In the case statement, ACC Assistant Director Mahbubul Alam said Khaleda Zia, who was the custodian of the country's wealth in her capacity as prime minister, criminally violated her oath and abused power by giving Niko the opportunity to extract gas worth Tk 10,000

The plaintiff said the other accused were complicit in the illegal

### Mahbub

FROM PAGE 16 The lawyers said the matter was at the bottom of the list so it did not come up for the hearing during working hours. The hearing may take place today, they added.

The HC issued the rule on the acting secretary general of pro-Saifur faction and six standing committee members following a writ filed by party chief Khaleda Zia-appointed Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain challenging the EC invitation to Saifurled faction.

Earlier on October 29 last year, some standing committee members in a meeting at Saifur's residence made former finance minister M Saifur Rahman acting chairperson and replaced Delwar with Maj (retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed, giving rise to the raging factional But four standing committee

members -- Dr RA Gani, Tanvir Ahmed Siddiqui, M Shamsul Islam and Khandaker Mahbubuddin Ahmad -- who attended the meeting, in their replies to the court said it was not a standing committee On the EC decision to invite BNP, Mahbub said EC could dis-

from Election Commission.

Dr Toufiq

FROM PAGE 1 Division of the SC headed by Chief Justice Mohammad Ruhul Amin vacated its earlier stay order on operation of the HC bail order following a petition by the govern-

Meanwhile, hearing on charge framing in the graft case against Hasina, also Awami League chief, resumes at a special court today. Earlier, the hearing was adjourned on February 7 following a time petition by the prosecution law-

The HC had granted interim bail to Toufiq on Feb 3 following a writ petition in which he challenged bringing the case under the Emergency Power Rules (EPR). The court had also issued a rule

on the government asking it to

explain why bringing the case under the EPR should not be declared illegal. Toufiq was sent to jail on Jan 16. The prosecution lawyers on February 7 sought time in the case on the ground that they needed the

time for preparations to participate in the hearing on charge framing. The previous day, the HC delivered the landmark judgment declaring illegal bringing of the Tk 2.99 crore extortion case against

Hasina under the EPR. Hasina was produced before the Special Court-1 of Judge Firoz Alam on February 3 for charge framing in

Anti-Corruption Commission Deputy Director Sabbir Hasan lodged the case with Tejgaon Police Station on September 2 last year, accusing Hasina and six others of using their influence through mutual understanding to help a foreign company and its local partners win a deal for setting up a barge-mount 100MW power plant in Khulna, depriving the lowest bidder.

Hasina's co-accused at the time were Toufiq, former Power Development Board (PDB) chairman Noor Uddin Mahmud Kamal Managing Director of Summit Industries and Mercantile Corporation Private Ltd Aziz Khan, its Director Farid Khan, United Group Chairman Hasan Mahmud Raja and its Director Abul Kalam Azad. Another accused was included in the charge sheet later.

## AL, Samyabadi Dal

be discussed at the dialogues,

common positions on the issues to

based on 14-party's 31-point charterof electoral reform proposals. Briefing journalists after the meeting, AL Presidium Member Tofail Ahmed said they want to help the caretaker government in bringing an end to the prevailing

political, economic and social

crises through the dialogues. He said both parties reached a consensus on raising at the dialogues the issue of releasing all AL leaders detained under the ambit of the ongoing anti-graft drive including its President Sheikh Hasina and General Secretary

Abdul Jalil. He demanded that the caretaker government holds a free, fair and credible election and hands over power to elected representatives.

Samyabadi Dal General Secretary Dilip Barua demanded that the government holds the dialogues immediately without slapping it with any precondition. He also asked the government to hold the parliamentary election as early as possible, and demanded a specific timeframe for it.

Tofail said his party will sit again with leaders of other components of 14-party coalition to finalise a common agenda to be discussed at the dialogues after the dates for it are fixed. AL leaders Syeda Sajeda

Chowdhury, Amir Hossain Amu, Abdur Razzak, Suranjit Sengupta Kazi Zafrullah and Syed Ashraful Islam were present while Samyabadi Dal was represented by Abu Hamed Shabuddin, Lutfur Rahman, Beren Saha, and Harun Chowdhury among others.

## Oil, gas prices

FROM PAGE 16 "We've only coal as alternative energy source," he said, adding that the government could not yet take decision in this regard as the coal policy is yet to be finalised

Replying to a question, the

adviser said they have not had any discussion on adjusting the energy prices. "It might be her (Hua Du's) general view. He said the government will

consider adjustment of the energy

More than one-fourth of ADB's

prices in appropriate time.

financial assistance to Bangladesh since 1973, about \$ 2.48 billion, has been in the energy sector. Yet only 38 percent of the population has access to elec-

tricity and about 7 percent to natu

ralgas, according to ADB figures. The power sector has received about \$1.7 billion to improve the capacity of power supply, and another 23 technical assistance grants totalling about \$14.6 mil-

ADB assisted Bangladesh in

developing major gas fields (Titas, Habiganj and Bakhrabad), major transmission systems, and most of the distribution networks across cuss the matter with party chairthe eastern part of the country, person Khaleda to avoid controwith over \$676 million in loans and versy. "The sub jail is not far away \$5 million in technical assistance grants since 1975.

## Contract signed

FROM PAGE 1

The decision to import refined petroleum from the UAE, a new source of fuel for Bangladesh, was taken to ensure smooth supply of diesel to farmers for irrigation during the ongoing winter crops cultivation, meeting sources said.

The Advisory Committee on Economic Affairs approved the proposal of the energy ministry for the import of fuel without any tender, also to take place under a state-tostate deal.

"The Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation has estimated that the cost of 3.90 lakh tonnes of refined petroleum is Tk 2,082 crore," a meeting source said. Of the fuel, 3.30 lakh tonnes are diesel. Earlier, the purchase committee

approved the food ministry proposal to purchase 5.67 lakh tonnes of rice at acost of Tk 1,596 crore. Talking to the reporters, Mirza Aziz hoped that the import of rice

from India would help boost the governmentstock As per the approved proposal, 5 lakh tonnes of rice would be

imported from India at the cost of Tk 1,396 crore. has been fixed at \$399 per tonne.

ments will reach the country in phases by road, sea, river ways and railways. As per the proposal, this bulk import would take place without any tendering process as there is an agreement signed between the two

Starting from this month, the ship-

governments to this effect, officials In addition, the government will procure 25,000 tonnes of rice from a local importer at the cost of \$402 per tonne and another 42,000 tonnes from 13 importers at the cost of \$420-

\$430 per tonne. The purchase committee also approved two other proposals placed by the industries ministry for importing a total of 20,000 tonnes of phosphoric acid for two BCIC (Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation) fertiliser factories in Chittagong at the cost of Tk 102 crore.

The local traders heaved a sigh of relief following the withdrawal of the ban on rice export by the Indian government yesterday. Customs authorities at Benapole and Indian Petrapole check posts

issued 52 gate passes for shipments

of rice. Until evening, a total of 280

tonnes rice entered through the Benapole land port. India however put a condition that rice export is allowed only for those who opened letters of credit (L/C) at over \$500 per tonne, reported a correspondent from

Benapole. According to an order of India's Director General of Foreign Trade, the L/Cs opened at below \$500 has

### been cancelled making uncertain Hannan Shah

violating EPR.

FROM PAGE 1 gate on February 7 just as he was released on bail in another case -in which too he was accused of

Hannan Shah has been in and out of jails since mid-last year. On May 14 last year he and his son Shah Rezaul Hannan were arrested in Dhaka in an extortion case. Later another case was filed against

released from Kashimpur jail on July 22 after the High Court granted them adinterim bail for two months in both cases. He was then arrested on

Both father and son were

November 7 last year for violating On January 30, the High Court declared his detention illegal and the Appellate Division upheld the HC decision on February 3. He was then released on Feb 7 when he was rearrested at the jail gate on fresh

## Biman penalty

FROM PAGE 1

2004 and their plea to accommodate them on the next flight was also rejected. So, they had to buy fresh tickets from Thai Airways to return to India.

Biman argued that denying

seats to the passengers was well

within the rules and norms under the Warsaw Convention that regulates liability of airlines. It contended that according to the rules, if reconfirmation was not received 72 hours before the departure of a flight, reservation stands

be free to allot seat to any other

passenger. But the commission said had that been the case, the airlines are variously described by officials should have re-allotted the seats to some other passengers after it cancelled the reservations. There were many unoccupied seats on the flight and there was no reason for Biman to deny the 12 passengers seats even if their tickets had been cancelled on technical grounds, it added.

### 18 trafficked FROM PAGE 16

them back home. The Samity has in January. taken the returnees to its custody.

The 18 people are Purnima, 6, Rahima, 11, Usha Rani, 17, Farida, 13, Manwara, 23, Achhia Khatun, 25, Ansar Gazi, 42, Zohora Khatun, 26, Manzura Khatun, 22, Manirul Islam, 17, Farida Khatun, 14, Arzina Khatun, 28, Hafizur Rahman, 22, Fatema, 18, Tanjila, 15 and three children whose names could not be known.

the fate of import of 12,000 tonnes rice, as L/Cs for the quantity has been

opened at \$390 per tonne. The Indian government took the decision after holding a meeting with

exporters' association yesterday. In the wholesale markets in Bangladesh, prices of both local and Indian varieties of rice shot up by Tk

India's embargo on rice export. Coarse rice was selling in retail markets at Tk 30 to Tk 32 per kg yesterday against Tk 28 to Tk 29 just a

50 to Tk 200 per maund following

weekback Wholesalers at Karwan Bazar said price of each maund was Tk3,440 last week, but it was Tk 3,620 yesterday,

with an increase by Tk5 per kg. Many retailers believe that the price hike is a result of artificial crisis created by importers and distribu-

Meanwhile, Myanmar said it

would consider exporting rice to

Bangladesh since it has a surplus,

says a foreign ministry press release on the 3rd Foreign Office Consultations between the two countries yesterday. Foreign Secretary Touhid Hossain led the Bangladesh delegation while Average purchase rate of the rice Myanmar Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Kyaw Thu led his side

> during the talks in the Myanmarese capital Nay Pyi Taw. At the meeting, the Myanmar foreign minister said that his country has one million tonnes of surplus rice for export per annum and exporting 3 lakh tonnes of rice to Bangladesh on regular basis should not be a problem, the press release added.

### Chittagong cops enough to earn them exemplary

punishment. He said the two sources would also be charged with the crime.

mugging charges surfaced against A timber merchant in Ek Kilometer area in the city complained to the police commissioner yesterday that the three cops forced him into paying Tk 88,700

last month.

Meantime, more extortion and

"On my way home from a gro-

cer's at about 11:00pm on January 14, I saw the three men pulling up in front of my warehouse, looking for me. As I asked them about the reason, the driver pulled me by the collar and took me to the car", Md Salamatullah, the timber merchant, told this correspondent. "The AC then accused me of possessing illegal timber and demanded Tk 1 lakh from me. As I

denied the charge and refused to

pay him, he punched me in the face-

and started beating me. I still bear

the bruises in my legs," he said, adding that they let him go only after he managed to give them Tk 88,700 that night. "One of the guys from whom I borrowed the money phoned me this morning (Wednesday) and drew my attention to the newspaper report. I instantly recognised

### my complaint," Salamat said. Sept 11 attacks

them and made no delay to rush to

the commissioner's office to lodge

FROM PAGE 16 charges were sworn against suspects "alleged to be responsible for the planning and execution of the

attacks" in 2001 that killed nearly

3,000 people Hartmann said the six include Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the suspected mastermind of the attacks in which hijackers flew planes into buildings in New York and Washington. Another hijacked plane crashed in the fields of western

Pennsylvania.

together before a military tribunal. But the cases may be clouded because of recent revelations that Mohammed was subject to a harsh interrogation technique known as waterboarding which critics call

Asked what impact that will have

on the case, Hartmann said it will be

The military wants the six tried

up to the military judge to determine what evidence is allowed. Prosecutors have been working for years to assemble the case against suspects in the attacks that prompted the Bush administration

### to launchits global war on terror. Pak envoy

five other militants in a gun battle on Monday.

cancelled, and the airlines would for operations against Nato and US-led troops in the southern Afghan province of Helmand. Islamist fighters in Pakistan who as al-Qaeda or pro-Taliban mili-

tants have been blamed for a string

of suicide bombings and clashes

Dadullah had been responsible

with security forces in recent months. Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf has accused a key militant leader, Baitullah Mehsud, of orchestrating December's assassination of opposition leader

Her killing caused the postponement of general elections due The polls are now scheduled for

Benazir Bhutto.

hit by further violence, including a suicide bombing in the tribal region of North Waziristan that targeted political activists going to an election rally. Bhutto's party was due to

Monday but the run-up has been

release her posthumously published autobiography in Islamabad later on Tuesday.

1995 and voluntarily resigned from

force officials said.

any savings with these banks. He also said he does not have the