# 1,493 more arrested

8:00am yesterday morning. Meanwhile at a press briefing

held at the Police Headquarters yesterday, Nur Mohammad, the inspector general of police (IGP), said the one-month-long special drives, launched on May 28, are not intended to harass any political leaders and activists.

The special drives have been launched primarily for two reasons -- to improve the 'deteriorating' law and order situation during last few months and to impose precautionary measures ahead of the upcoming national elections, he said.

Looting of firearms from police in Rajshahi and Gazipur and the rise in number of killings in the city are signs of deterioration of the situation, he pointed

out. Brushing aside the allegations of harassment to political activists, the IGP said 6,043 of the arrests were made as there have been pending warrants for their arrest.

A press release issued by the Police Headquarters said only 39 of the arrestees were political leaders or activists. Of them, 20 are from Awami League, 17 from BNP, one from Jamaat and one from Kalyan Party.

The IGP said the ongoing special drives have five objectives -- execution of arrest warrants, recovery of illegal arms, arrest of convicts, recovery of illicit drugs and arrest of individuals possessing illegal arms.

Rapid Action Battalion Director General Hasan Mahmud Khondoker and DMP Commissioner Naim Ahmed were also present during the briefing.

Our Rangpur correspondent adds: Police arrested 43 alleged criminals in eight upazilas of the district during the last 24 hours till filing of the report.

The arrestees are accused in different criminal cases, said sources in police control room. Since May 31, police arrested 129 alleged criminals in the district.

Our correspondent from Kushtia adds: The joint forces on Sunday night arrested editor of a local daily newspaper and chairman of a union parishad (UP).

Joint forces confirmed the arrests of Manjur Ehsan Choudhury, editor of local daily Andoloner Bazar, and advocate Akram Hossain Dulal, chairman of Jointeehazra UP. DV regisses

Manjur is also Kushtia correspondent of Channel-i, while Dulal is the president of Khoksa upazila unit Jubo League.

Kushtia sadar police. They were drive at Namkan village at about | charter of demand that include sent to district jail vesterday after being shown arrested under section 16(2) of the Emergency Power Rules (EPR).

Our Kushtia correspondent adds: The joint forces arrested 16 people including a listed criminal from Meherpur district.

The listed criminal, Kalu Kubbat Ali from Bhaberpara in Mujibnagar, is accused in at least

seven cases. Our Barisal correspondent reports: The joint forces raided Paradise Hotel-2 in the town and arrested its director Ashrafuzzaman Anis under EPR.

Our Rajshahi correspondent

arrested a BNP activist from Belgharia area in Durgapur upazila, bringing the number of arrested grassroots political activists in the district to five. The BNP activist, Sabdul

adds: The joint forces yesterday

Islam, has been held under the EPR. He is accused in several cases.

# Tripura

recently.

Commerce and Trade Minister Jitendra Chowdhury to a parliamentary standing committee on commerce that visited the state

The Ashuganj river port is about 25km from Tripura and Chittagong seaport is around 75km away. If transhipment is introduced between the two countries using these two ports, Tripura could become the commercial gateway of the North East, Jitendra argued in a charter of demands submitted to the

demanded development of infrastructure to enhance trade with Bangladesh and north-eastern Indian states.

"We have demanded improvement of land customs stations on both sides of the border, repairing and widening of roads, connecting Akhaura and Agartala by rail and facility to use Ashuganj and Chittagong ports," Jitendra said.

The seven-member parliamentary team also visited customs stations at Akhaura check post and held discussions with Jitendra, and the importers and exporters of Tripura on the possibility of increasing trade with Bangladesh.

While Bangladesh has a huge trade gap with India, the Indian state Tripura too suffers from such imbalance when it comes to trade with the neighbouring country.

## Outlaw killed in 'crossfire'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A member of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) was killed yesterday in crossfire between Rab and his accomplices at Namkan village of Bagmara

The dead was identified as Abdur Rashid alias Sagor, 28, son of Ishaq Ali of Jhikra Joanbhagpara village.

In a press release, Rab said when They two were handed over to the law enforcers conducted a 2:30am, a gang of terrorists opened fire on them prompting the Rab members to retaliate.

Rashid sustained bullet injuries during the shootout while his cohorts managed to escape the

He was rushed to a local health complex where the on-duty doctor declared him dead.

Rab said Rashid was accused in a number of cases on different charges including murder, extortion and robbery.

The law enforcers recovered a shutter gun, a bullet, an empty cartridge, two machetes and two knives from the scene.

# CPB rally bombing

FROM PAGE 16

general of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), additional inspector general of the criminal investigation department, IOs and supervisory officers of the cases concerned were present.

The meeting was told that the killing of BNP ward-48 unit general secretary Mostafa Jaman Shibli at Jigatola was linked to extortion. The IO told the meeting that Ponir, an accused in the case, was killed in crossfire between his cohorts and law enforcers.

Emerging from the meeting, the home adviser told reporters that criminals went on hiding after the declaration of the state of emergency. But there is a possibility that they will be active again just before the elections.

Mentioning some incidents like looting of firearms from law enforcers in Rajshahi, the jailbreak in Chuadanga, and shooting on three brothers in the capital, he said they asked the joint forces to conduct drives for curbing crimes across the country.

When asked about the claims of political parties that the drives are aimed at political leaders and activists, Matin said such claims are baseless.

The drives by the joint forces are not aimed at political activists, he said.

ensure holding of a free, fair and Bangladeshi and a Singapore credible election in December, he said adding that no innocent people will be harassed.

said the drives will not have any negative impact on the on-going dialogue between the govern- Naya Paltan Sunday night.

ment and the political parties. Asked about Awami League President Sheikh Hasina's medi cal treatment, he said Hasina is receiving treatment at the Square

"It's up to the government to decide whether she should be allowed to go abroad for treatment," he said replying to another question.

The home adviser said the matter of lifting the state of emergency also depends on the gov

### Hotel

City Hospital sources said the condition of injured Sri Lankan national Samantha Lake was grave.

Sri Lankan ambassador to Dhaka visited the hospital around 11:00am yesterday and enquired doctors about Samantha Lake's condition.

A number of others injured Sunday night were having treatment at different hospitals and clinics in the city.

Personnel from different law enforcement and intelligence agencies searched the hotel, including luggage of boarders at different rooms. They let boarders check out yesterday morning after questioning them.

The hotel had seven Indian, The drives were launched to three Sri Lankan, three national Sunday night.

At least 45 people, including two foreign nationals, several law Replying to a query, Matin enforcers and pedestrians, were injured following a series of blasts inside the multi-storied hotel at

# Dhaka down

5:00pm.

FROM PAGE 1 inch by inch on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue during the peak hours at

The situation in the lanes and bi-lanes was even worse, as hundreds of rickshaws were stranded in queues.

At places, it took about two hours to commute just three to four kilometres of distance. Many left their vehicles on roads and started walking to their destinations braving the rain, as the congestion seemed to be never-ending.

"For nearly an hour, our bus stood still at Banani. I have never experienced anything like this before," said Shamima, a service holder, who reached Karwan Bazar from Banani in the evening after two and half hours.

Students from schools, colleges and universities in different parts of the city found no way but to walk to their homes as they failed to get any transport.

Many did the same in the afternoon once the rain stopped after pouring for over three hours.

"I started from Shyamali and I The Tripura government also | found that the vehicles are at a complete standstill in the Manik Mia Avenue and Farmgate area, said Md Al Mamun, who was heading for Shahbagh on foot at about

The traffic situation seemed to improve a little after 8:00pm, with vehicular movement gaining momentum in the streets.

## IOJ to join talks

FROM PAGE 1 last night, "We have already informed alliance leaders that we will take part in dialogue with the government."

The government has invited them to take part in the dialogue on June 10, he told The Daily Star

Jamaat-e-Islami, a major partner in the alliance, is yet to finalise its decision in this regard although party leaders had earlier said dialogue will not be fruitful without participation of the top leaders of three major parties -- BNP, Awami League and Jamaat.

Moreover, IOJ leaders plan to propose holding national election by November this year.

Meanwhile, detained top leader of the four-party Khaleda Zia, during her first appearance before court on Sunday demanded national election by October.

Earlier, BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain took an initiative steps to make the alliances active as part of preparations for a movement to restore democracy in the country.

Following this, alliance leaders met on May 22 at Delwar's residence and prepared a 14-point release of Khaleda, withdrawal of all cases against her and ensuring her participation in the dialogue.

Later, the BNP secretary general announced that his party would not take part in dialogue without its chairperson as it (dialogue) would not be meaningful without her.

"It would be better for all of us if the four-party alliance takes up a common stand on all important issues like participation in dialogue," a senior BNP leader said. He however declined to comment on IOJ's decision to join the dialogue.

Sources in the BNP said Khaleda Zia recently asked Delwar to unite nationalist forces, and his initiative in this regard followed this.

## Delwar

FROM PAGE 16 also the founder of the BNP.

Referring to the guidelines he received from detained chairperson during one-to-one parley on Sunday, Delwar said she stated in the dock that this government is "parasitic" and "illegal".

Party source said the chairper son, during her closed-door meeting with Delwar, asked to remain united and prepare for movemen to restore democracy in the coun

Criticising the government for launching the crackdown on the political activists, Delwar said the government is arresting the political leaders and workers in a bid to thwart the possible movement against it.

Political leaders have been arrested in the name of curbing terrorism but the real culprits are still in safe den, he said,

Presided over by JCD acting President Sultan Salahuddin Tuku the meeting was also addressed, among others, by party's joint secretaries general Selima Rahman, Nazrul Islam Khan and Goyeswar Chandra Roy, acting Office Secretary Rizvi Ahmed and JCD General Secretary Sahfiul Bari

### 6 killed

FROM PAGE 16

killing three passengers on the spot and injuring 33 others.

The injured were admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) and Trishal Upazila Health Complex. Of them, three succumbed to their injuries at the MMCH soon after admission and their identity could not be

Police seized the buses, but their drivers and helpers fled the scene immediately after the accident.

# Hasina calls for halt

NEWS

FROM PAGE 1

During the hearing, the court witnessed a heated row between the defence and the prosecution over the latter's disclosure of a defence intelligence report, after Public Prosecutor ABM Sharfuddin Khan Mukul presented a military intelligence report before the court.

He told the court that the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) discouraged and raised objections to the purchase of MiG-29 warplanes as the purchase was unnecessary and was done by wasting state

Raising an objection, the defence asked the prosecution why the DGFI report was presented. Defence lawyer Syed Rezaur Rahman asked the public prosecutor whether DGFI disclosed the report without being asked for it.

At that time, former army chief Gen (retd) Mustafizur Rahman stood up in the dock and asked the prosecutor to say who was the chief of DGFI during the time in question.

Echoing the former army chief, Hasina also raised questions about the propriety of making the defence intelligence agency's report public.

"It should be questioned whether the report prepared by an intelligence agency can be produced before the court and made public in this manner. As a former head of the government, I may raise the matter for legal clarification," Hasina told the

The judge then asked the prosecutor to explain, but the prosecutor had no answer.

After the debate, the public prosecutor read out the report to the court and said expensive MiG-29 warplanes were not a necessity for the country's air force, since impoverished countries like Bangladesh just cannot afford the cost of maintaining those aircraft.

An AL government led by Sheikh Hasina purchased eight high-end MiG-29 warplanes causing losses of hundreds of crores of taka to the state, he said. The prosecution appealed to

the court to frame charges against the accused under the Prevention of Corruption Act. Hasina said she was concerned about protecting the

country's independence and

sovereignty, and that is why she

purchased the warplanes for the state's air force. Explaining the reasons behind the purchase of the supersonic warplanes, she said, "Our military policy is defensive, but we Rahman agreed with the proposals, have to protect ourselves if the nation comes under attack. And I purchased the warplanes for the sake of our protection. Is it a criminal offence? If I am to stand

am worried about the independence and sovereignty of our coun-She also said it is the responsibility of a government to well equip a country's armed forces including the air force, to protect the country's independence and

in the dock for this offence then l

sovereignty. "If the public prosecutor questions the purchase of an essential instrument for national safeguard, then we all should be worried about our sovereignty, she added.

The defence counsels told the court that there is no credible evidence for framing charges against their client, Hasina. Later, talking to reporters,

### Falu gets 5yrs FROM PAGE 1

with his officials and employees used the CI sheets in his infrastruc-

The case was later brought under the Emergency Power Rules (EPR) on February 18 last year and Sheikh Abdus Salam, assistant director of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), was made the investigation officer (IO).

The court framed charges against the accused on February 7 this year.

Asked for reaction, Falu's counsels told newspersons they will file an appeal with the High Court. They said the factory officials and employees did not see the seal that read "Relief materials of Relief and Rehabilitation Department: Not for Sale".

Public Prosecutor ASM Golam Fattah told reporters he expected life-term imprisonment since the relief was meant for the destitute. He added Falu misappropriated the relief and benefited financially from it.

Falu was arrested at his Cantonment residence in the capital on charge of corruption on February 6 last year. Owner of private satellite televi-

sion channels ntv and Rtv and daily Amar Desh, he is facing five cases -three for misappropriating relief materials and two for concealing information in his wealth statement submitted to ACC and dodg-National Board of Revenue on May 27 filed the last case against

him on charge of dodging Tk 2.75

crore income taxes during 1996-

2006.

defence counsel Barrister Shafique Ahmed said the quoted price for the 8 Mig-29 aircraft was US\$ 289 million but the government led by Hasina bargained it down to \$115 million through state-to-state negotiations, sav

the state. He said the defence asked the prosecutor to produce the price quotation in the tender document, but they did not agree to show.

ing a large amount of money for

Prosecution lawyer Advocate Syed Shamim Ahsan said the warplanes were purchased with cash money breaking laws and causing a huge loss to the state, while the erstwhile Hasina government was supposed to buy those with 10 to 20 percent cash payment, and the rest of the payment was supposed to be made through exporting goods to the seller country.

Regarding the intelligence report, he said the report was collected because the case needs it as

The now-defunct Bureau of Anti-corruption (Bac) filed the case against Hasina and six others with Tejgaon police station on December 11, 2001, accusing them of causing a loss of Tk 700 crore to the national exchequer by purchasing the eight MiG-29 jets while Hasina was the premier of the

Later in the afternoon, Hasina was taken to Square Hospital from a makeshift special jail for a medical check up, reported UNB.

DIG (Prisons) Maj Shamsul Haider Siddique said a fourmember panel of specialist physicians examined her ears and eyes. The DIG quoted eye specialist Dr Shah Alam as saying that the

former premier has developed an allergy in her eyes due to not taking a prescribed medicine. Other doctors on the board were ENT specialist Dr Shahil Mahmud, Dr Sarwari Alam and Dr Mizanur

Rahman. The doctors said Hasina's overall health condition is good but the problem with her hearing remains

"It was a routine check up," the DIG said. Hasina was taken to the hospital

unchanged.

#### Abdul Mobin was appointed as the at 3:20pm and was transported back to the jail around 5:30pm. Gono Forum

FROM PAGE 1 speed up preparations for the

elections "It needs to be emphasised that to create an environment of confidence and security, the emergency state must be progressively relaxed and withdrawn completely well before the polls."

Commerce Adviser Zillur saying they will look into those.

He remained optimistic about the chances of the dialogue's success, saying democratic forces came together in 1990 to solve the nation's problems through dia-

### Foreign missions

missions, which also followed statements made by US Charge d'affaires Geeta Pasi.

A ministry spokesman in a press release said a number of recent reports published in the media cite statements made by foreign missions which may be construed as interference in the internal affairs of Bangladesh.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs would hope that any such statements that may give rise to such interpretations should be

avoided," he added. A spokesperson from the US embassy Sunday said they asked the government to explain why the

arrests were made. "We understand that many people, including political party leaders, have been arrested over the past several days. We are seeking clarification from the government regarding the reasons behind these arrests," a US embassy

spokesman told UNB Sunday. The US spokesman said the American government has always called on Bangladesh to observe international human rights standards by extending full legal rights to individuals under arrest or under trial.

## Death of student

FROM PAGE 16

blockade.

hundred students of the university gathered at the scene of accident at about 10:30am and put up barricades on the road and formed a human chain demanding exemplary punishment to the persons responsible.

They also demanded setting up of a speed breaker there.

Later, the students removed the barricades from the road at around 1:00pm after the high-ups of law enforcement agencies assured them of setting up a speed breaker by yesterday following directives of the acting Chittagong City Corporation Mayor M Manjur The officer-in-charge of

Chandgaon Police Station (PS) said

the authorities concerned started constructing a speed breaker there at around 3:00pm. Hundreds of vehicles remained stranded on both sides of the road on October 2. Pintu is in custody while his wife due to the two and a half hours long

### Talks, polls Jute mill closed after workers ransack office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Production in the state-owned Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills was suspended yesterday for an indefinite period after about 200 workers of the factory turned violent during a demonstration demanding payment of their arrears.

Police said the agitating workers laid siege to the administrative building of the mill at about 9:30am demanding payment of their arrears. They became enraged when

Project Director Mokaddes Hossain and other high officials refused to give them any fixed date for pay-The angry workers started throwing stones and brickbats at the office of the project director, admin-

after the project director and other officials had left the scene at about 10:00 am. Police and security guards, who were on duty at the mill, fired at least five blank shots to disperse the

istrative buildings and staff quarters

angry workers, sources said. The residence of the project director also came under attack.

On information, law enforcers

rushed to the scene and dispersed

Major changes

the agitating workers by charging baton on them. A large number of policemen were deployed in and around the mill at about 12:00 noon.

sources, Principal Staff Officer (PSO) of the Armed Forces Division Lt Gen Masud Uddin Chowdhury was transferred to National Defence College (NDC) as its commandant, while outgoing Commandant of NDC Lt Gen ATM Zahurul Alam was deputed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for

posting abroad. The sources said Zahurul Alam is expected to be appointed to the post of the high commissioner in Australia, which has been vacant for over a year now.

General Officer Commanding

(GOC) of Chittagong Area Maj Gen

Principal Staff Officer (PSO) of the Armed Forces Division. GOC of 11 Infantry Division and Bogra Area Maj Gen Mohammad Shamim Chowdhury was trans-

ferred to Chittagong area. None so far however has been appointed to Bogra area. Meanwhile, Chief of Army Staff Gen Moeen U Ahmed called on President Iajuddin Ahmed in Bangabhaban yesterday.

# 3 JMB men

FROM PAGE 16

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence had completed their arguments and the court recorded statements of 24 witnesses. According to the prosecution, a

team of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) raided the house of Russell' brotherin-law Sultan Bepari a Ashkona, Uttara, in January 2006. They arrested the three JMB men from the house and seized 71 items including ammonium

electronic metres, time devices and different other bomb making materials from their possession. The arrestees gave confes sional statements to magistrate saying that they had possessed those materials for making bombs

to carry out attacks at different

nitrate, detonators, iron rods, iron

sheets, batteries, gunpowder, 27

wrist watches, electric circuits,

Earlier, all the three were con victed for blasting bombs at differ-

### ent places across the country. Tofail's wife

FROM PAGE 16 Sessions Judge's Court in Dhaka yesterday granted bail to former lawmaker Nasiruddin Ahmed

Pintu's wife Nasima Aktar Kalpana in a corruption case. Judge Azizul Haq granted her bail when she surrendered to the court

and prayed for bail. On May 29, (ACC) Deputy Director Golam Shahrier Chowdhury filed a case with Ramna police station against former minister Tofail Ahmed for amassing Tk 2.45 crore wealth, which is inconsistent with Tofail's known sources of income, and concealing information about Tk 1.86 crore in his wealth statement submitted to the ACC. His wife and daughter were charged with

abetting him in doing so. An HC bench comprising Justice Khondker Musa Khaled and Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury heard the bail petition filed by Anwara and Taslima Zaman yesterday. Both appeared before the court.

Their counsel barrister M Amir-ul

Islam submitted before the court that since the ACC did not issue any notice to the petitioners for their wealth statements before filing the case against them, the case is malafide. He also said as per amended provisions of the Emergency Power

are women and children they will be granted bail. ACC's counsel Khurshid Alam Khan opposed their bail prayer. Pintu and his wife were accused of amassing illegal wealth worth Tk

21.89 crore and concealing that in the

wealth statement submitted to the

Rules (EPR), if co-accused in a case

The ACC filed the case against them on June 6 last year, and the investigation officer pressed charges

was absconding till yesterday.

FROM PAGE 1 and repression" on its leaders

across the country. At a secretary-level meeting, AL asked the government to stop the crackdown and demanded imme-

diate release of the arrestees. The meeting was held at party chief Sheikh Hasina's political office in Dhanmondi with AL Acting General Secretary Syed Ashraful Islam in the chair.

"Without any reason, a good number of our party leaders and workers have been arrested. These arrests have been made to complicate the prevailing situation and in this situation, it is not possible to hold dialogue and election meaningfully," Syed Ashraful Islam told reporters after the meeting.

Alleging that the arrests were politically motivated, he said police started raiding houses of AL leaders across the country after the party's extended meeting had been held in the capital on May 26.

Ashraf said they would send a upwards from 1.4% to 1.75%. letter with its decision on dialogue to the chief adviser's office within a couple of days.

Replying to a query on whether the AL will form an alliance with the BNP following Khaleda Zia's call for an all-party unity, the AL leader vehemently rejected the idea and said that as a secular political party, AL would never go for any coalition with the "fundamental and radical" BNP and Jamaat.

with them as they are solely responsible for the current situation. Their widespread corruption, politicisation and misrule from 2001 to 2006 led to 1/11," Ashraf said. "When the Sector Commanders' Forum has been

urging all political parties not to

"There will never be any unity

join hands with the anti-liberation war forces, the BNP is trying to revive its coalition with Jamaat.' Headded. The meeting also decided to send forms and instructions to the party's district, upazila, thana and union level leaders by tomorrow for the mass signature collection

Hasina. The meeting also decided to make a synopsis on the organisational reports submitted by the grassroots level leaders from the party's 72 organisational districts at the extended meeting on May 26

to press home the party's six-point

demand, including the release of

# Aug 21

FROM PAGE 16 The two detained militants admit ted to journalists that they took part in the grenade attack aimed at assassinating AL chief Sheikh

However, the court ordered to

send Uzzal to the Dhaka Central Jail as the investigation officer of the case and ASP of the Criminal Investigation Department Fazlul Kabir did not file any petition for his remand. He produced the two before the

Magistrate's Court and submitted a forwarding report seeking a 10-day remand for Sabuj. In the forwarding report, the IO said Huji leader Mufti Abdul Hannan in his confessional statement mentioned the name of Sabuj as one of the grenade throwers. He needs to be placed on a 10-day

remand to find out whereabouts of

the others involved in the grenade

Asked about the Dhaka City committee's plan to form a 'human chain' around the special jail where Hasina has been detained, he said they would discuss the matter with city leaders within a couple of days and fix a date.

## Euro inflation is 'uncomfortable'

BBC Online

Eurozone interest rates should not fall because inflation is at 'uncomfortably high levels', the International Monetary Fund

Eurozone inflation was 3.6% in May, well above the European Central Bank's (ECB) target rate of about 2%.

But the IMF predicted that the

for eurozone growth this year

appropriate to keep policy rates on hold," its report said.

but warned that inflation could still

hit 14% this year. The organisation said that a stronger rouble would not damage the competitiveness of Russian

# Israel's housing move contrary to international

AFP, United Nations

UN boss Ban Ki-moon is deeply concerned at Israel's decision to build 884 more houses in east Jerusalem, which is 'contrary to international law', his press office

ment by the Israeli government to invite new tenders for construction in Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem," the statement added. "The government of Israel's continued construction in settlements in the occupied Palestinian

Annapolis process," it said. Drafted by the United States, the European Union, Russia and the United Nations, the roadmap for Middle East peace calls for a halt to

ress since it was drafted in 2003, but Israel and the Palestinians agreed last November to re-launch it during a conference in the US city of Annapolis that restarted the peace process after a seven-year Dhaka Chief Metropolitan

> promised state. The Palestinians have repeatedly called the expansion of settlements in the West Bank including east Jerusalem the biggest obstacle

# Danish embassy

FROM PAGE 16 Moeller said a Pakistani cleaner

agency said eight people died in all. Shah said at least six were

Norway temporarily closed its embassy in Islamabad after the attack.

An AFP reporter described scenes of panic after the blast and saw paramedics carrying off several blood-soaked casualties. The deafening blast shattered windows hundreds of metres

smashed. I was hit by a sharp object and am bleeding from my leg," said local resident Mohammad Dilshad. Mohammad Salim, a worker at a development agency, the UNbacked Devolution Trust for

onds after the explosion.

(IMF) has said.

rate would fall below 2% late next year without a rate rise. The IMF also revised its forecast

"In these circumstances, it is

The IMF also reported on the Russian economy yesterday. It said the rouble should be allowed to appreciate to prevent the economy from overheating,

companies.

said yesterday in a statement. "The secretary general is deeply concerned at the recent announce-

territory is contrary to international law and to its commitments under the roadmap and the

Jewish settlement activity in Palestinian territories and an end to Palestinian attacks against The plan has made little prog-

On Sunday, Israel announced plans to build 884 more houses in occupied and annexed east Jerusalem, in a move that enraged the Palestinians who have demanded it has the capital of a

to a final peace deal. attacks, the IO added.

militant insurgency. employed at the embassy died and three local employees were hurt, but the embassy's four Danish staffers including the charge d'affaires were unharmed.

Pakistani government-run

television and the state news

killed, including two policemen stationed at the embassy, and 27 wounded. Indian and Dutch ambassadors and the Australian defence attache were damaged in the

blast but no one was injured, diplomatic officials said.

"I was in my room and there

was a huge blast and the windows

Community Development, told AFP he arrived at his office sec-

five people on the street lying on blast.

got to the first injured and thought he was dead but he was still breathing. We put him in a car and sent him to hospital," he added. Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister

Yousuf Raza Gilani condemned

outside Islamabad's secure dip-

lomatic enclave, shut down

The Danish embassy, located

the blast, officials said.

the ground in a pool of blood. I

briefly in February 2006 due to riots over the cartoons in The nearby residences of the Pakistan which left five people Denmark recently downgraded the embassy and moved out most foreign staff. In April, Denmark moved embassy staff in

> Algeria and Afghanistan to secret locations. Hundreds of people staged a new protest against the cartoons in the central city of Multan on Monday, officials said.

The blast was the first in

Islamabad since a bomb blast at

an Italian restaurant frequented

began peace talks with Taliban

militants based in the tribal belt

by foreigners on March 15 killed a Turkish woman and wounded 10 foreigners, including four US FBI Pakistan has experienced a lull in a year-long wave of suicide attacks since a new government came to power in March and

bordering Afghanistan. Pakistani Taliban movement spokesman Maulvi Omar said he "I heard cries for help. I saw had "no knowledge" about the