## Diplomacy

FROM PAGE 1 said a top official source yesterday.

The cabinet meeting on Monday decided to discuss the issue with the three countries and ADB, Jica and IDB and initiate sending the proposal to the global lender if the situation improves.

The government also aims to ensure that the project co-financiers do not back off in case of a negative response from the WB again, the source added.

"ADB, Jica, IDB, the US, the UK and India have shown their interest [in helping resolve the issue]. We will take their advice [before seeking a WB review]," Finance Minister AMA Muhith said yesterday. "Of course, they have

asked the WB to settle the issue quickly," he told the press at the Cabinet Division of the secretariat after his meeting with deputy commissioners. "The US, the UK and

India asked the WB to work out the issue. They did that on different occasions," he said. "I have to request them to look at it." When journalists men-

tioned Sunday's cabinet decision not to request the WB for a review, the minister said, "We've decided not to make the proposal for the time being. We will monitor the situation." A finance ministry offi-

cial said the government was delaying making the proposal to the WB because a further refusal would mean further embarrass-"The government will

first discuss the issue through various diplomatic channels. The process has already been initiated. Later, it will proceed to make a proposal to the

The government is focused on convincing the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) and Islamic Development Bank (IDB) to honour their funding commitments.

Besides, it would seek additional funding from them to construct the 6.2km bridge.

If the government finally moves to build the bridge with its own money, it will require a lot of foreign currency. Eighty percent of Tk 15,000 crore for the main bridge construction and 60 percent of Tk 6,000 crore for river training will have to be met by foreign currency, said the ministry official.

The World Bank has cancelled its \$1.2 billion credit for the Padma bridge construction on graft allegations involving Bangladeshi officials.

Of the co-financiers, IDB and Jica have not yet followed suit while the ADB said it was "unable" to

their funding. "We are

"We are ready to con-

might not have to do it

However, the minister

already allocated this fiscal

year's funds for the project.

"We may have to provide

some more money."

FROM PAGE 1

Saturday.

Eid-ul-Fitr.

tinue as usual.

in irregularities.

Buet closed

Islam and Pro-VC Prof

According to a press

release of Buet, the univer-

sity will remain closed till

August 24 on account of

summer vacation

Ramadan, Shab-e-Qadr and

No classes and examina-

tions will be held at the uni-

versity during this period

but activities at its offices

and dormitories will con-

The teachers association

alone."

finance the project. being sold for Tk 100. Muhith said yesterday that apart from the WB, no

co-financer had cancelled hopeful that others will stopped."

sucking people's blood.

struct the bridge with our own feed, but I think we said the government had

ultimatum demanding agricultural items. resignation of Vice Chancellor Prof Nazrul of essentials in the country. Habibir Rahman by

> tor general of National Consumers Rights Protection Directorate, said the directorate will soon have the required manpower to strengthen market monitor-

level gradually.

The director general emphasised the need for raising public awareness about the consumers' rights protection act and its proper

has been agitating for removal of the VC and Proimplementation. VC for alleged involvement

TIES WITH DHAKA

# Indian govt's failure irks North-east

STAR REPORT

India's failure to reciprocate Bangladesh's "peace gestures" is frustrating the chief ministers of the northeastern states, Mumbaibased Daily News and Analysis (DNA) reported yesterday.

The daily reported that granting a concession on Teesta River water and operationalising the already signed land boundary agreement were two important issues expected by Dhaka. Bangladesh. The chief ministers of

India's northeastern states are peeved at the United Progressive Alliance government's inability and indecisiveness to table the Border Management Bill in the previous budget session of Parliament due to stiff opposition from the Trinamool and the Bharatiya Janata Party, the newspaper said. "The delay is hampering

the transborder trade, contact and cooperation. Improvement in relations with Bangladesh is a real game-changer for the north east," said Meghalaya Chief Minister Mukul Sangma.

Indian government officials admit that Sheikh Hasina's government in Dhaka has immensely contributed towards maintaining peace in the militancyaffected north-eastern

She reversed the policy of her predecessors by ordering closure of several mili-

tancy training camps and even handed over some hardcore Assam militants to India.

Five Indian states of West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram share a 2,429 mile-long border with Bangladesh. Without naming them,

tain political parties had been bent on ruining the prime minister's Look East vision and his carefully strategic initiative towards He believes that his state, along with the entire north

Sangma told DNA that cer-

east, was on the verge of making huge strides in development by the Look East policy. The Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-Maoist) government in Tripura is

also demanding greater

economic engagement with

Bangladesh. Sangma, who met Indian premier Manmohan Singh in Delhi recently, demanded improvement in internal waterways to Bangladesh to promote cross-border investments.

He further asked for a transit route to Bangladesh's Chittagong port, claiming it was the nearest port for all in the north-east.

Stressing cooperation with Bangladesh, the chief minister said improved relations had enabled them to move heavy machinery from Kolkata to Tripura through Bangladesh territory to set up the Palatan gas-based power plant.

# Profiteers'

FROM PAGE 1 oil and sugar.

Mozibur was addressing a view-exchange meeting on commodity prices at the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) auditorium in the capital. Speaking at the meeting,

organised by DCCI, businessmen said many of them are selling items counting losses. The prices of ginger and garlic have gone up due to complexities over import duties on the spices in the current budget.

They, however, admitted that they are selling some items such as lentils at "a bit higher" prices.

At the meeting, the Tariff Commission chairman presented profit margins item by item. He said a kilogram of ginger costs Tk 37, but the item is being sold for

The price of imported onions should be Tk 14 to Tk 15 a kg, but it is being sold for Tk 25, he said.

The import cost of dates is Tk 58 a kg whereas the item is

Businessmen are making a profit of Tk 43 on a kg of lentils, Mozibur said. "It is profiteering and must be

He likened the practice of hiking prices abnormally to

Pleading with businessmen, he said: "Please, do not do business to make abnormally high profits. It is irreligious.

Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry President AK Azad called for efforts to stop the use of formalin in fruits, strengthen market monitoring and cut bank interest rates on loans for imports of

He said there is no possibility of a price spiral ahead as there are adequate stocks

Abul Hossain Mian, direc-

He said the directorate will open its offices at district

DCCI President Asif Ibrahim said the main rea-

sons for the price spiral of essentials are price hike in energy, power and gas increased transportation costs due to traffic congestion; a tendency to make extra profits by middlemen; high bank interest rates; lack of information regarding food stocks; mismanagement in

and transparency. He stressed the importance of strong market monitoring and proper implementation of the consumers rights protection act as well as strengthening the Trading

preservation; and lack of skills

Corporation of Bangladesh. Ibrahim urged the government to take steps to prevent extortion in the highway transportation, establishing sales centres under government control and ensuring a

proper distribution system. Niaz Rahim, president o Bangladesh Supermarket Owners Association, Kh Babul, general secretary of Agro Products Importer Association, and Ali Zaman, president of Small and Medium Enterprise Association, also spoke.

## Witness

FROM PAGE 20 linked with the 2004 arms

On April 2 of that year, law enforcers seized 10 truckloads of arms and explosive at the jetty of Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Limited.

The former DIG, who was also a member of the fivemember probe body formed immediately after the arms seizure, is a vital witness in the cases, said Kamal, adding

his absence was abnormal. The prosecution lawyer submitted a petition to the court, seeking special attention on this issue.

Farrukh had given information about several high profile accused in his deposition on July 3. He also spoke of a few things relating to the Bangladesh Army and the then general officer commanding of the 24 Infantry Division Moin U Ahmed, the prosecution lawyer said.

Farrukh was present in the July 5 court proceedings, Kamal said, adding that from Monday his cell phone was found switched off. The only a fortnight before the prosecution then sought exam. Doctors had to ampuhelp from law enforcers of Bhasantek Police Station in tate his leg from the thigh to the capital to contact him at save his life. his residence in Dhaka Cantonment residential area

The technical team of Centre for Disability in but police failed to trace him. Development in Savar The next proceedings will grafted an artificial leg on be held from July 29 to July 31, him on August 29 last year. the court said.

# WB might

FROM PAGE 1 of its loan for the Padma bridge project.

Speaking at a press briefing at his office yesterday, the ACC chairman said as the evaluation committee for the project did not select Chinese Railway Construction Company (CRCC) for constructing the bridge, the company and its local agent Venture International might have misguided the WB, and therefore it cancelled its loan commitment.

Explaining why the CRCC was not selected, Ghulam Rahman said although the company had no experience of steel piling needed for such a bridge, its local agent had submitted various fake documents mentioning that it (CRCC) had experience of constructing the Auckland Bay Bridge in San Francisco. But the evaluation com-

mittee headed by Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury detected the fraudulent acts of Venture International, and did not fall in its trap, said the ACC chairman. On the other hand, the

ACC chairman said, the Chinese company and its local agent misguided the WB saying that the evaluation committee had done injustice to them. He also said as the CRCC

was not selected despite repeated recommendations by the WB, the bank became unhappy. Replying to a query, he

said, "There is no scope of action against venture international according to our Asked, Ghulam Rahman

said the ACC is not sending

any team to Canada to col-

lect information related to the Padma bridge graft allegation. He said it has found "documentary evidence of corruption" against a number of political leaders who had

been in power in the past

and these people were

involved in amassing wealth

by abusing power. "We're still receiving documentary evidence of corruption against such people," he said.

# State cheating

FROM PAGE 1

for "obstructing law enforcers from discharging their duties". Earlier in April last year, the 17-year-old was charged in an arms case.

Ironically, the investigation into the case lodged by his mother against six Rab personnel has not been completed even in 14 months.

The rights boss accused the home ministry of "noncooperation" in this regard, and said: "The home ministry is not investigating the [shooting] incident even after the commission repeatedly wrote to the ministry to do so."

Talking to The Daily Star, Limon termed "false" the

cases against him. "I appeal to the government to withdraw the cases so that I can lead a normal life not having to require appearing before the court at the cost of money and sufferings," he said.

The filing of the second charge sheet came to light on July 8, the day the case was heard in a court.

Limon's counsels Nashimul Hasan, Manik Acharya and Akkas Shikder termed the charge sheet "unacceptable," saying it was submitted without informing the defence.

Nusrat Jahan, magistrate

part of their job. of the court, fixed The bill must be passed September 2 for hearing the by the upper house and defence. signed off by the president Limon, who is now on before it becomes law.

bail, was not present in court The main opposition as he had classes at Kawkhali party Pakistan Muslim PGS School and College. League-N headed by former prime minister Nawaz He missed his examina-Sharif boycotted the protion last year as Rab, taking ceedings, but party spokeshim for a criminal, shot him man Siddiqul Farooq conin the left leg on March 23, demned the new bill.

> "Since it is designed and aimed to protect one person namely Asif Ali Zardari from accountability, therefore it has no constitutional, legal and moral effects," he told AFP.

Ashraf defended the bill, saying it would not obstruct

# Poet, family not spared

FROM PAGE 20

the second prosecution witness in the war crimes case against Quader Mollah, also said the Jamaat assistant secretary general was the "key person" in the brutal killing of Mirpur Bangla College student Pallab during the war. The 58-year-old witness

said he had heard about the

incidents from people leav-

ing the capital in panic after

the crackdown on the night

of March 25, 1971, night. The three-member tribunal headed by Justice ATM Fazle Kabir also recorded the cross-examination of the witness before it adjourned the case proceedings until today. During his two-and-a-

half-hour-long statement, Shahidul said, "On March 27, 1971, Abdul Quader Mollah, Hasib Hasmi, Abbas Chairman, Akhter Gunda, Nehal and many others killed poet Meherun Nesa, her brothers and mother and chopped their bodies into pieces." "Akhter Gunda and his

one Pallab alias Tuntuni from Thathari Bazar to Muslim Bazar in Mirpur. Then they [Akter and his accomplices] cut his fingers and hung him up on a tree and killed him mercilessly," the witness went on to say. "The incident occurred

may be on April 5, 1971, and Quader Mollah and Akhter Gunda were the key persons behind the incident," added Shahidul.

Shahidul said he was a student leader before the Liberation War and had had taken part in different movements, including the sixpoint movement of 1966 and in the 1970 election campaigns for the Awami League-blessed candidates of Mohammadpur and Mirpur areas.

He said Quader Mollah and his accomplices had taken part in the election campaign for the "infamous" Ghulam Azam, the then ameer of East Pakistan Jamaat-e-Islami and a candidate of the area.

Shahidul said during the regime of military dictator Gen Yahya Khan, a false case was filed against him and he got acquitted afterwards.

"But those who had testified for me [in the case] were apprehended and killed by Abdul Quader Mollah, Akhter Gunda, Nehal, Hasib Hasmi, Abbas Chairman and other Jamaat men and non-Bangalees in the black night of March 25, 1971," said Shahidul.

Shahidul said after Father of the Nation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's speech at Dhaka's Race Course Maidan on March 7, 1971, they had prepared to take part in the Liberation War and hoisted the national flag of Bangladesh on March 23, 1971, the Republic Day of Pakistan.

The witness said on the morning of March 26, 1971, he saw the houses of Bangalees in Mirpur area burning and Biharis celebrat-

dollar corruption cases

The court dismissed

Yousuf Raza Gilani as prime

minister on June 19 after

convicting him of contempt

in April for refusing to

reopen the cases against

lower house of the Pakistani

parliament on Monday

night said senior govern-

ment figures including the

president and the PM could

not be found guilty of con-

tempt for acts performed as

The bill passed by the

President Asif Ali Zardari.

against the president.

FROM PAGE 1

ing. "When I and Mantu [one of his Shahidul friends] had gone closer, Quader Mollah and his accomplices tried to catch us.

"We escaped by swimming cross the Turag river and took shelter in Bangaon village." Later, Shahidul went to

India for training and took part in the Liberation War, said the witness. Shahidul, also chief of Mama Group Guerrilla

Bahini, said Mirpur area had

become enemy-free on

January 31, 1972, even

though the Pakistani army

had formally surrendered on December 16, 1971. "These enemies were Khan Senas [Pakistan army personnel] Jamaat-e-Islami men, Al-Badr men, Al-Shams men and Razakars [three auxiliary forces of the Pakistan army]," said the witness, adding, "And Quader

Mollah was not detached

from any of the incidents."

The witness said the freedom fighters attacked the Mohammadpur Physical Training Centre, Graphics accomplices forcibly brought Arts Institute and "the headquarters of the then Pakistan army" on December 16, 1971

On Victory Day and in the face of a strong attack, the Pakistani army left the places and merged with Biharis (non-Bangalee people) in Mohammadpur and Mirpur "Bihari, Khan Sena

Jamaat-e-Islami along with the members of Islami Chhatra Sangha [the then student wing of Jamaat] built a strong resistance [in Mohammadpur and Mirpur areas]," said the witness. They had convinced the

Biharis that Bangladesh would turn into a part of Pakistan once again. On December 17, 1971 Shahidul recovered the bod

ies of martyred intellectuals from the Rayerbazar killing field, he said, adding, found a small sack full of human eyes." "We picked up many killers who were hiding in Mohammadpur and following their information, we

the brick kilns of Rayerbazar," said the witness. "They [martyred intellectuals] were our best sons of the soil," said Shahidul, adding, "It [killing of intellectuals] was the brutality of the

recovered the bodies of hun-

dreds of intellectuals from

Al-Badr and the Razakars." In his testimony, the witness also gave his family background and preliberation politics in the then East Pakistan.

During his testimony, defence counsels on several occasions alleged that the prosecution was "leading" the witness. At one point, the witness became upset with the defence objections. "You [defence] come here

to advocate for the Razakars of 1971 but I am here to give my testimony responding to my conscious. You are changing my mindset by interrupting," said the witness.

After lunch, Ekramul Huge, defence counsel of Quader Mollah, cross-

anyone from doing their

duties, nor would it make

Naek, who introduced the

bill, said confusion in the

existing contempt law had

been removed and insisted

the amendment was not

Zardari date back to the

1990s, when he and his late

wife, late premier Benazir

Bhutto, are suspected of

using Swiss bank accounts

to launder \$12 million alleg-

edly paid in bribes by com-

panies seeking customs

cases in 2008 when Zardari

became president and the

president has full immunity

Court overturned a political

amnesty that had frozen

investigations into the

president and other politi-

cians, ordering that the

analyst Imtiaz Gul said he

did not think the new bill

would help the prime

minister, even if it makes it

Author and political

But in 2009 the Supreme

The Swiss shelved the

inspection contracts.

as head of state.

cases be reopened.

into law.

The allegations against

Law minister Farooq H

anyone a "holy cow".

made in haste.

Pak MPs pass bill

examined the witness for 30 minutes and asked around 25 questions.

Replying to a question, : During cross-examination Shahidul said although he yesterday, prosecution withad enrolled in Dhaka: ness Nirmal Chandra University for his undergrad-: Sharma told the uate degree but he could not : International Crimes complete the course for political reasons.

He said he left Bangladesh for Sweden in 1986 and lives there now with his family. The witness was ailing but

he refused ask for adjournment when questioned if he needed any breaks. He said, "Ask me questions, I don't mind dying here answering questions... I'll answer as along as I'm alive." At 3:35pm, the tribunal

adjourned the case proceed- : War. ings until today as defence : counsel Ekramul Huge sought adjournment on his own health grounds.

indicted Quader Mollah with: home in Modhya Gohira six charges of crimes against : village in Chittagong. His humanity, including murders and mass killings.

#### Truckers FROM PAGE 1

the government side has

contacted us to address our demands. So, we will observe the strike," Rustom Ali, the association convener, told The Daily Star last evening.

However, trucks and : pital. covered-vans that will carry relief materials for floodstrike, he said.

demands were not met. The : night of April 13. 14-point demand of the asso-: ciation include stopping extor- : he took his father inside the tion in ferry ghats, easing the : house. process of issuing driving licence, allowing trucks and covered vans to ply city streets during daytime.

Meanwhile, Dhaka Mohanagar CNG Autorickshaw Owners Association has called off their two-day strike that was scheduled to begin today. The decision came follow-

ing a two-hour tripartite meeting among the auto-rickshaws owners, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) officials and law enforcers yesterday. The association leaders called the strike on Saturday to

press home their 10-point "We have postponed the strike following assurance from the BRTA chairman to address our demands within

"We are not the authority to: and was asking redundant address all their demands. We : questions. assured them of placing their demands before the authori-

ties like NBR, communica-

tions ministry and other gov-

ernment bodies." The 10-point demand include increasing economic lifespan of CNG-run autorickshaws from 11 to 15 years, stopping police harassment and declaring the sector as an

Supreme Court has opened

industry.

he told AFP.

the government."

LeT now more

#### The tribunal then passed an order saying, "Seeing the health condition of defence lawyer is not well, we are

have to finish the crossexamination.'

a case and it will take it to its Liberation War. logical end rather than aborting it under pressure,' "It will sharpen the already simmering fight between the judiciary and

> Medical University. Sayedee is facing 20

### dangerous than al-Qaeda: US expert

IANS, Washington

With al-Qaeda on the ropes, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), with government insists the the help of its Pakistani backers, is now probably the most dangerous terror group in the world, according to a former CIA analyst. The November 2008

attack by ten LeT terrorists on multiple targets in Mumbai, India was the most significant and innovative terrorist attack since 9/11 Bruce Riedel, Senior Fellow Foreign Policy at Brookings Institution, a Washington based think tank, wrote in The Daily Beast.

WAR CRIMES TRIAL

## Witness Nirmal cross-examined

: STAFF CORRESPONDENT

: Tribunal-1 that he had to flee his home fearing for his life in 1971 and could not even attend to his wounded father. Witness Nirmal on

Tuesday in his deposition

had said he witnessed his family members brutally killed in a raid of the Pakistani army, accompanied by BNP leader Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, on April 13, 1971, during the Liberation Nirmal lost his mother, brother, two uncles and : nephew when the Pakistani

army lined them up and On May 28, the tribunal: opened fire on them at their : father Joyonto Kumar Sharma's left hand and leg were riddled by bullets. He had died after suffering for 5-: 6 years. War-crimes accused Salauddin Quader's defence counsel Ahsanul Huq Heena

yesterday asked the sixth

prosecution witness whether

he took his father to the hos-

Nirmal said it was impos-: sible for him to take his father affected people will remain : to the hospital as Hindus out of the purview of the : could not move safely during : the Liberation War. He said The association convener : he had given his seriously also threatened to go for ; wounded father water in a tougher movement, if their : pot and left the house on the

> Nirmal said his father was quite heavy and gravely : injured. "It was difficult for

> my brother and me to carry

Heena also asked whether

: him inside the house," he Asked why he had not called for help, Nirmal said almost all in the neighbourhood had left. "On 15-16 April, some locals came to see

my father," Nirmal said. At about 4:00pm Heena sought adjournment of the

court proceedings. Chairman of the tribunal Justice Md Nizamul Huq gave the defence two options; either continue with the cross-examination or the tribunal would pass an order which may not go in the

defence's favour. Heena seemed discontent two months," said ATM with what the tribunal said Nazmul Hasan, general secre-: and continued the crosstary of the association, yester- : examination. The tribunal asked Heena to take rest for a BRTA Chairman Ayubur: while as the counsel was Rahman told The Daily Star, having trouble keeping pace

> Since the stipulated time for the cross-examination was almost over, Justice Nizamul asked the counsel

how much time he needed more to finish off. "I need one or one and a halfhours more," Heena said.

inclined to allow him one and halfhours more. "By 12:00pm they will

"I don't think the Salahuddin Quader is Supreme Court will budge facing 23 specific charges of from its position. The crimes against humanity committed during the

> Earlier, the tribunal accepted two petitions for providing Jamaat leader Delawar Hossain Sayedee with home-cooked meals and three religious books at the prison cell of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib

> counts of crimes against humanity at the tribunal.

# BRTA means

FROM PAGE 20 BRTA office into a place of corruption by looting peo-

irregularities.

ple's money," Quader told some officials. The minister ordered to sack its two officials for their alleged involvement in

He, however, claimed he has removed some irregularities from the organisation by

hard efforts and close supervision. "I have removed 45 percent irregularities from here, but the remaining anomalies still grasp the sector. A nexus of brokers, security officers and some BRTA officials are involved in the irregularities."