Owner warned

The ship, SS Noway, was learnt to be staying near Port Kalang in Malavsia.

Bangladesh Ship Breakers Association (BSBA) and Green Peace sources said the SS Norway, built in 1962, is laden with more than one thousand metric tons of objects of different categories, including toxic asbestos. Besides, there is a possibility of huge poisonous gases stored in ship's cabins.
Divisional Director of the

Department of Environment (DoE), Chittagong, Mosharraf Hossain, when contacted, said it issued a letter to the buyer of the scrapped ship yesterday, cautioning him not to bring it into Bangladesh.

Principle Officer of the Mercantile Marine Department (POMMD) Captain Habibur Rahman told the news agency that he had learnt that the vessel was staying at a place near Port Kelang

Haii Lokaman Hossain, the owner of Subed Ship Breaking Yard, had procured the vessel from international market at an unusually lower price than current international price level to dismantle it at country's only scrapped ship breaking yard at Sitakunda.

n the wake of globally circulated red alert by the Green Peace, the leading environmentalist organisation, warning about grievous consequences regarding the cargoes the dead vessel was carrying, a serious concern has developed among the public and private organisations in port and shipping sectors here. "Shipping administration is fully

aware of it and is constantly monitoring the movement of the vessel. I had put up the matter before the director general of Mercantile Marine Department today." Captain Habib said, adding that a proper investigation will be carried out.

The matter also came up for discussion at a meeting of the Port Facility Security Organisations held at Chittagong Port Bhaban yesterday and it was decided to keep a close eye on the issue, meeting

"We also informed the coast guard, customs and Chittagong Port Authority requesting them to take proper steps so that it could not enter and anchor anywhere in the country," DoE's Mosharraf Hossain

Jafar Alam. President of the BSBA, said they had unanimously endorsed a decision at a meeting of the association last month not to buy the vessel considering the country's greater interest after getting red alert circular from the Green Peace.

Environmentalists as well as officials apprehend that environment at coasts and health of labourers involved in dismantling work may affect seriously if the dead vessel is cut here.

Iop shots

FROM PAGE 1 Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Salehuddin Ahmed is now the chairperson SaarcFinance.

Following Afghanistan's ioining the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) last year, the country's central bank governor will join such meeting for the first time.

Noorullah Delawari, governor of Da Afghanistan Bank, Daw Tenzin managing director of Royal Monetary Authority of Bhutan, Khadeeja Hassan, managing director Maldives Monetary Authority, Das Vishwavir Saran executive director of Reserve Bank of India, Bir Bikram Rayamajhi, deputy governor of Nepal Rastra Bank, Tawfiq A Husain, deputy governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, W A Wijewardena, deputy governor of the Central Bank of Sri I anka will attend the meeting.

Eminent economist Professor Wahiduddin Mahmud and Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed, managing director of Palli Karma-Shahayak Foundation (PKSF) and also former governor of the central bank will chair o sessions of the symposium.

The symposium recommendations aimed at rapid poverty alleviation in the region will be finalised at the next meeting of the Saarc

Faulty power plant

FROM PAGE 12

glitches. It again went into operation on January 14, 15 and 16 this year and added 50 to 60 MW of power to the national grid. The authorities detected hundreds of technical faults

and shut down the plant again. On February 8, State Minister for Power Igbal Hasan Mahmud visited the site and asked the plant's Chinese builder CMC to start commercial operation of both the units by

The CMC is relying on three experts of the UCC, an American company specialised in ash management in a coal mine. A reputed company in handling coal minerelated problems, the UCC has an agreement with the CMC.

The plant is being set up under a supplier's credit of more than \$250 million. But the much bigger Meghnaghat 450 MW gas-fired AES power plant was set up at a cost of

The Barapukuria plant in Dinajpur is situated in the gas-starved northern region where power plants are naterial will save the nation about \$2 billion in oil import cost in 30 years

The plant will require 2,500 tonnes of coal a day and the annual production from the coal mine has been estimated to be at 1 million tonnes. Official sources said 65 per cent of the coal to be produced from the mine will be consumed by the power plant and the remaining 35 per cent used for brick-fields and other

domestic purposes. Sources said there are allegations of gross irregularities in procuring the plant's turbine by changing the design without approval of the authorities. The consultant of the project committed the deviation without informing the PDB and later argued that the changed design of

the turbine is "better". The PDB however id not convinced.

But no action is being taken in this regard due to pressure from a politi cally well-connected lobby, which is favouring the consultant, and also the power project, sources pointed

Back in 1998, a secretarial committee to probe foul play in appointing the controversial consultant identi fied gross irregularities on the part of the PDB in selecting the foreign consultant

The committee then directed the PDB to appoint a consultant on the basis of merit, instead of favouring But appointment of consultant was

then stalled for three years because of pressure from the lobby behind the controversial consultant. The CMC Consortium is yet to

complete development of Barapukuria coal mine. The work started in 1994 and was scheduled to complete by 1998.

Sources said it might take four more years to see the Tk 1600-crore coal mining project to start full opera-

BSF

FROM PAGE 12

BDR sources said BSF gunned down Akbar Hossain, 40, and Ashraful Islam, 32, of Kazipur in Gangni upazila in Meherpur district and injured another named Lalchad. BDR said the two were shot as they were haggling with Indian traders on cattle prices near the border.

BSF also handed over a Bangladeshi farmer Laltu, 25. BDR sources said a BSF patrol team entered Bangladeshi territory and picked him up as he was working on

HC bars judge

Alam filed the writ petition. Advocate M Enayetur Rahim, secretary of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA), and advocate Abdul Matin

secretaries of the law ministry, Cabinet Division and the president, the Supreme Court registrar and the

Chunnu has been participating in BNP's public meetings in Kishoreganj where he introduced himself as a candidate for the next parliamentary election from

violation of Government Servants (Conduct) Rules, 1979," the petitioner alleged.

Section 905 of the Civil Rules and Orders says: "Judges of all grades should avoid as far as possible, becoming the guests of or entertaining those private individuals or government servants who are or may be interested in civil or criminal cases or in matters, which may eventually come before them

"...It is undesirable that judicial officers should mix themselves up in local affairs politically or otherwise.

Asked to comment on the court order. Chunnu told The Daily Star yesterday: "I haven't yet received the court order. I'll make any com-

ment only after receiving it."

Talking to The Daily Star,

Enayetur Rahim said, "Being a

sitting judge and a government servant, no-one can be involved in political activities. He [Chunnu] has lost his neutrality by engaging in

On August 16 last year, Awami League leader Sharif Ahmed Sadi of Nagua, Kishoregani town, issued a legal notice upon the government to take action against Chunnu for his participation in the political activities

The SCBA, on August 3, demanded removal of Chunnu from the judicial service for his alleged

participation in political activities.
The SCBA has recently sent a letter requesting Acting Chief Justice Mohammad Ruhul Amin to take action against Chunnu.

2 killed

such activities.

FROM PAGE 12 Following his confessional statement, Rab-6 conducted a drive in Daulatpur area of Khulna early Monday to recover arms and arrest

his accomplices. Rab sources said when the team reached Daulatpur, the accomplices of Babu made a gun attack on the law enforcers. The Rab men also opened fire and Babu died in

Rab recovered a gun with three bullets from the spot.

Babu, an alleged commander of Purba Banglar Communist Party, was accused in several criminal cases including one for murder.

Mohiuddin

FROM PAGE 12

police obtained important information and documents that may help solving the mystery behind the Court Inspector Mahbub murder, Alam Siddiki told the court.

"We [police] are yet to recover a firearm that was used in the murder The killers hit Prof Taher on the head with heavy firearms. We hope Mohiuddin might help recover many other documents". Siddiki said adding that police also needs to know the real motive of the killers.

He assured the court that police will not disregard the normal procedures of interrogation.

Advocate Saiful Alam Shelly, who oleaded for the accused, said confessions of the suspected killers were not vet verified and seem to be

A police team along with Mohiuddin went to the bank of River Padma at Shahapur in the city and found two ATM cards (one of Standard Chartered Bank and the other of Brac Bank) and a torn visiting card of Taher under a stone.

Police said Mohiuddin took away the credit cards and some other documents with him just after the murder. He later had Jahangir dressed with Taher's suits and took him to one of his relative's house at Kadirganj to hide the travel bag.

After Taher's body was found from a sewer behind his house, Mohiuddin asked Jahangir and his brother Abdus Salam to go into hiding.

Dr Taher brought some documents of anomalies during Mohiuddin's teaching career as he came to Rajshahi from Dhaka to attend a meeting on the latter's promotion, police said.

Police recovered a part of the missing documents from Prof Taher's travel bag on Sunday night.

The same night police brought Mohiuddin and three other accused killers, Jahangir, Abdus Salam and Nazmul face to face when they identified each other as their accomolices. Police recorded the event in a

 $Rajshahi\,Awami\,League\,(AL)\,held$ a big protest meeting at Shaheb Bazar yesterday evening. City AL Secretary AHM Khairuzzaman Liton, who chaired the meeting, said police is not even trying to nab Shibir leader Shalehi, a suspected mastermind in the murder case of Dr Taher.

Shibir leader

FROM PPAGE 12

police to submit charge sheets in cases of Dr Taher murder and four murders in South Badda within a

The orders came at a meeting of the home ministry's Monitoring Cell to review sensational cases. The state minister for home chaired

the meeting.

Dr Taher, founding professor of RU geology and mining department, went missing on February 1 and police recovered his body from inside a sewer behind his campus residence two davs later.

The state minister ordered police to arrest Salehi as Jahangir, caretaker of the slain RU teacher, Jahangir's brother Salam, and RU teacher Mohammad Mohiuddin, who were arrested in connection with the killing. in their confessional statements named Salehi to be involved in the

killing, meeting sources said. Yesterday's meeting reviewed 11 sensational cases which include RU teacher Prof Yunus murder case, and cases for murder of two judges in Jhalakathi. Kamrul Islam Momin in Kafrul, advocate Dilruba Haq Papiya in Barisal, college student Sajal in Dhanmondi and Arjuda Parveen

Fency in Khilgaon. Babar also directed police to immediately arrest Jafar, an absconding suspected killer of Prof Yunus.

The minister said partial judgement of a case filed under Explosive Substances Act in connection with the murder of two judges in Jhalakathi has been given and full judgement would be given within 15 to 20 days.

Charge sheet of the murder case filed in connection with the same incident would be submitted in a couple of days, the meeting was told.

Babar asked the Monitoring Cell to specially monitor the cases for killing journalists.

Of the 284 cases enlisted in the Monitoring Cell so far, verdict of 84 cases were given in which 248 accused were awarded capital punishment, 247 life-term imprisonment, sixty five imprisonment on different terms, and 329 were fined, while 311

were acquitted. Some 45 cases are now under nvestigation and 118 under trial, a home ministry official present at the meeting told reporters.

Cabinet Secretary Abdul Halim, Establishment Secretary Dr Mahbubur Rahman, Home Secretary Safar Rai Hossain, Inspector General of Police Abdul Quayum and Monitoring Cell officials were also present at the meet-

Nepal

FROM PAGE 12

Deuba was ordered to be released from jail following the dissolution of the panel, said Subodh Pyakurel, president of the Informal Sector Service Centre human rights group.

"Sher Bahadur Deuba has just been ordered released following a court order," Pyakurel said. The much-criticized anti-corruption

body was set up after Gyanendra sacked the government just over a

year ago and assumed total control. Gyanendra said the takeover was necessary because the government was corrupt and had failed to tackle a 10-year Maoist insurgency. Deuba was prime minister when the king took

In July, the panel jailed Deuba for two years, and fined him 1.26 million dollars for alleged corruption relating to the granting of a contract in a road building scheme which formed part of a 464-million dollar project to supply drinking water to the parched capital.

Deuba has consistently said that he was framed by the royal body.

Hakaluki haor faces

He also suggested steps to save homesteads, cropland, roads and check possible merger of the Kushiyara with the Hakaluki.

All these are, however, gathering dust, sources said.

Several hundred households have been washed away, leaving thousands of people homeless in Manikkona, Kodupur, Basantapur, Fatehpur and Chandpur villages. After several educational institutions, mosques and markets, the existence of the Chandpur-Manikkona Road is now threatened by the continued erosion of the Kushivara bank. Azharul Islam, a resident of

Kodupur village, said, "I shifted my house thrice over the last few years I do not know what awaits my fate if the erosion continues.' During a recent visit to the area

seen near the road. Locals said the road will face great damage during the next monsoon if the rive embankment is not reconstructed immediately to stop the erosion. It will be a disaster if the Kushiyara falls into the haor as this will affect the ecology of the water

Azharul Islam. "The erosion continues along the riverbank in Kodupur-Basantapur area while new shoals are emerging on the other side," he

body that abounds with fish, said

Talking to The Daily Star, BWDB Superintending Engineer M Shamsur Rahman said the bio-

diversity of the Hakaluki haor--a safe area for migratory birds--must be protected. "We have informed the authorities about the matter", he added.

Several thousand inhabitants of Kodupur had to leave their ancestral homes and shift elsewhere due to erosion by the river within a decade said another resident Shahid Miah. "I have been left almost a desti-

tute after my land and house were devoured by the river," said 50-yearold Rafique Uddin of Manikkona The entire village will be washed away if the authorities do not take

any step immediately, he said,

claiming that at least 5,000 people

have already left the village. The Hakaluki is the country's biggest haor with an area of 18,000 hectares spread over Bianibazar, big breaches in the riverbank were Barlekha, Kulaura, Fenchuganj and Golapganj upazilas in the district.

Probe ordered

FROM PAGE 12 over the performance of state-rur

commercial banks. Replying to another query the finance minister informed that per capita income in 2004-2005 was \$470 while it was \$ 343 in 1995-96

Saifur did not answer the guestion whether any other country's per capita income is lower than Bangladesh. He however sought a notice to reply this question.

Resolve reforms issue

conducted fairly in an atmosphere

free of coercion and intimidation. In reply, LGRD and Co-operatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuivan said the government is

ready to discuss the ways to ensure

the elections are held in a fairer manner. The Awami League (AL) led 14party opposition alliance now waits for a government response to their proposals while the ruling alliance policymakers will discuss the issue and set strategy after Prime Minister Khaleda Zia returns from Pakistan

Asked about AL's next course of action, Opposition Whip Farukh Khan said, "We have placed our proposals in parliament and now the ball is in the government's court. We will wait for a formal response from them and at the same time, continue

our movement for the reforms.' Talking to The Daily Star about the way things have panned out of late. Moinul Hossain Chowdhury yesterday said both the government and the main opposition should act to settle the matter through discussion in parliament for the welfare of

"The people want to see them reaching a consensus on the issue. They want a peaceful transfer of power, not any confrontation," he

observed. Echoing the view, Hafizuddin Khan said none should take an extreme stance, bypassing the option of tackling the issue by having a better understanding between the two sides.

"No one will be benefited if the deadlock continues," he observed, adding that the government must play a robust role in resolving the crisis before its tenure ends.

On the opposition's proposals for reforms, Shajahan said there is

always a scope for improvement in the reforms that are musts for a free and credible election

The ruling and the opposition alliances should cease subscribing to the views that might lead them to a confrontation. Their efforts should rather be at conciliation, he said. About the charge of the defence

ministry during the term of caretaker government, all three former advisers seem to be agreed on the opposition's proposal in this regard. "The charge of the defence ministry should be in the hands of

the caretaker government, Hafizuddin observed. "Why the defence will not be under the caretaker government when it holds all other responsibilities of a government," questioned

Major General (retired) Moin. There's no logic in keeping the defence under the president during the caretaker government." he On the proposed reforms in the

EC, both Shajahan and Hafizuddin

said the commission must be allowed an independent secretariat and financial autonomy so that it can Besides, Hafizuddin proposed framing a law that would specify the eligibility to be a chief election

commissioner and election commis-

sioners. "Once the law is available,

anyone cannot be made an election Underlining the importance of maintaining transparency in the EC, Shajahan said, "Unfortunately, some recent happenings in the commission have exposed the lack of transparency in its activities.

Drug running goes

the peddlers have gone mobile," said DNC Deputy Director M Saiful Islam. But, sources concerned said law enforcers raid drug dens only occasionally, while some drug pushers

alleged they raid the dens when they

do not get their 'regular kickbacks'.
"The police really don't want to do away with the drug dens as drug dealing is a big source of income for them. So, when they raid they nab the addicts not the traders," said a DNC high official, adding, "For us, we sincerely want to curb the trade but we

don't have enough manpower." Heroin and injecting drugs are available at Chankhar Pool, Khilkhet, Agargaon, Mirpur sections I and II Mohammadpur, Jatrabari and Doyaganj. Apart from a number of drug dens in Old Dhaka, at least 20 other spots along the railway track from Doyagani to Airport Railway

Station are running smoothly. Several drug addicts said, and visiting a number of well-known drug spots it was confirmed, drug abusers face no obstacle in collecting any sort of drug, whether it be cheap cannabis or a costly injection.

"You can get anything if you have money," said Islam Uddin, an Injecting Drug User of Old Dhaka. "I've been taking drugs for the last 14 years. started with Phensedyl, and then shifted to heroin and for the last five years I have been taking injections. But, I never had much trouble in buying the drugs." he added

TK 6,000CR BUSINESS Sources said the country's drug business would amount to no less than Tk 6,000 crore.

According to the National Assessment of Situation and Responses to Opiate Use in Bangladesh, drugs are being smuggled from India across the border into at least 24 districts and from Myanmar into Bandarban and Cox's Bazar. "Smuggling routes of heroin powder, Phensedyl syrup and

buprenorphine injections exist

between West Bengal and

Bangladesh," the report of the latest

joint survey conducted by govern-

ment and non-government agencies

says. "Construction of bridges and

national highways has facilitated drug trafficking within the country after they get smuggled in," the report

Almost 90 percent of the opiates in the world are produced in the Golden Triangle comprising Laos, Thailand and Myanmar and the Golden Crescent comprising Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan, sources said. As Bangladesh is located between these two opiate-producing zones, it has become an easily accessible market for opiates, they

"Drugs are now available everywhere -- in all the districts and upazilas, and even in many villages. said DNC Director (Control) Mofazzal

"Huge money is involved in the drug trade. Once someone enters this business he never stops until his death," he said, adding, "So it's virtually impossible to completely rout the trade, but it's possible to control it and

we're trying to do that." Donors upbeat

parliament and look forward to free and fair elections being held in

The European Commission Delegation to Bangladesh took opposition Awami League's return to parliament as a great event for democracy in the country. "In my opinion the return of Awami League to the parliament

has been a great day for democ-

racv...It is an excellent sign of

willingness to discuss," a spokesperson for the European ommission Delegation said. The spokesperson said, "the recent trip of 'EU Troika' to Bangladesh has underlined the importance of dialogue taking place in parliament and not in the press.

And that is exactly what we hope will happen now."

The diplomat did not comment on the opposition's reform proposals on caretaker government and the election commission, placed in parliament on Sunday. "It is not for me to comment on them but for the politicians and the people of Bangladesh to take up the matter.'

A different

sination of Shah AMS Kibria. The deputy speaker said he has already received notices on the issues and the Business Advisory Committee will soon decide whether

to have discussion on those The proceedings began at 4:55pm with Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar in the chair. He returned to parliament yesterday after a treatment for one month.

After the Maghrib break, Hamid took the floor and demanded the ongoing session be extended so that the opposition lawmakers get time to participate in the discussion on the president's speech. "We are here to stay and to speak for the people." the deputy

leader of the opposition said amid

huge desk thumping from the treasury bench. In response, LGRD and cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said the prime minister has already consented to extension of the current session. He then

requested the speaker to convene a BAC meeting Later the AL lawmakers demanded discussion on power, fuel and fertiliser crises, what they said, would severely affect the

agricultural production Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim raised the issue and senior members of AL Abdur Razzak and Mohammad

Nasim joined him in demanding a discussion on the issue. "An acute shortage of power has been hampering the agricultural

production," Selim said. He observed that at least 10 people were killed in Kansat of Chapainawabganj when police fired on the people demonstrating for uninterrupted power supply, he observed. Meanwhile, ruling coalition

demanded immediate withdrawal of the US-led coalition forces from "The United States is enemy to humanity. Its forces are involved in brutal killings and other human

partner Jamaat-e-Islami lawmaker

. Abdullah Mohammad yesterday

raising a point of order. Slamming the US for its role in Palestine, he said, "In Palestine, the US is reluctant to accept a democratically elected organisation.

rights abuses in Iraq," he said

MOUDUD AS WHIP After the Maghrib break, the AL lawmakers entered the House on time while most of the ruling alliance lawmakers were absent. At this point, some of the opposition lawmakers commented that the treasury bench members might already have lost their enthusiasm for attending the proceedings.

Shortly afterwards. Law. Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed rushed to the lobby and brought some lawmakers back to the House.

Bhuiyan

to the hartal programme. main opposition Awami League will have

to take all the responsibilities. "When Awami League was in power, they appointed chief election commissioner (CEC), election commissioners w with the BNP, then main opposition However, we wanted to discuss with the oppositions on any issue for holding neutral elections in the

country," he said. The LGRD minister said the government will take steps to bring

the killers of BNP men to book. "Then Awami League government had filed false cases against BNP men in connection with Malibagh killing. The people will not pardon the perpetrators of this

killing." he said. Chaired by Matijheel BNP President Sajjad Zahir, the meeting was addressed, among others, by Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas MP, Adviser to the Commerce Ministry Barkatullah Bulu, BNP Office Secretary Mafigul Hasan Tripti, Jubo Dal Secretary Gayeshwar Chandra Roy and Organising Secretary Khairul Kabir

Power

FROM PAGE 1

of Tk 109 for consumption of up to 25 units. They said most of the consumers do not get more than 10 units a month.

The minimum charge was withdrawn in November last in the face of strong protest by consumers but was re-imposed in January.

Low gas

FROM PAGE 1 time," BGMEA President Tipu Munshi told the energy advisor.

He said the RMG factories in Gazipur, Savar, Tongi and Kaliakoir areas were the worst sufferers in absence of adequate supply of gas during the production hours. The BGMEA team also requested the advisor not to discon-

nect the gas lines to the 100 percent

export-oriented factories and give them a chance to pay the outstanding bills in six installments. In this regard, the energy advisor assured the BGMEA leaders to give necessarv directives to his ministry. The advisor informed that his ministry has decided to install parallel gas line alongside the main

line to ensure uninterrupted supply of gas to the industrial units. The delegation included BGMEA Vice-President Md Shahidul Haque Sikder, Vice- Ppresident (Finance) Shahadat Hossain Chowdhury Arun, Director Harun-or-Rashid and Chairman of BGMEA Standing

Committee on Power, Gas and

Telecom Engineer Mannaf Khan.

the number of student scholarship for Bangladesh from 75 to 100, the

Prime Minister Khaleda termed

ation between our two brotherly countries. We have also discussed ways and means of widening such cooperation, including expansion of bilateral trade," she said in her press "We have noted with satisfaction

the successful holding of annual foreign secretary-level consultations and the eighth meeting of the Joint Economic Commission in recent months," she said, adding that these contacts have added fresh momentum to the process of cooperation between the two coun-

Khaleda expressed her sincere hope that their discussion would pave the way for a more meaningful and cooperative bilateral relation-

Replying to a question, Khaleda said one of the targets of Saarc is to ensure peace, stability in this region and improve the lot of the people of this region. And the dynamics of Saarc that got new momentum from the 13the summit will increase day by day in implementing the forum's agenda.

She said even some differences between the member countries of the Saarc will be overcome for the betterment of all.

Both Khaleda and Shaukat strongly stated that they would work together in various fields of bilateral, regional and international affairs for the welfare of people, peace and stability. Before official talks, Khaleda and

Shaukat had about a 45-minute 4 MoUs SIGNED Bangladesh and Pakistan yester-

day signed four memorandums of

understanding (MoUs) on coopera-

tion in agriculture, tourism, export promotion, and product standardisation and quality assurance.

The MoU were signed at the Pakistan Prime Minister's House in the afternoon. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz witnessed the

signing ceremony. Pakistan Agricultural Research Council under the Ministry of Food and Livestock and Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council under the Ministry of Agriculture entered into the MoU in the farm

Agriculture Minister MK Anwar inked the deal on Bangladesh side while Pakistani Food and Livestock Minister Sikandar Hayat Khan on the host side.

The MoU on tourism was signed by Bangladesh Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan and Pakistan Tourism Minister Syed GG Jamal. The third MoU on export promotion, was signed by Foreign Minister Morshed Khan and Pak Commerce Minister Humayun Akhter Khan

The fourth one between Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA) and Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) in the field of standardisation and quality assurance was signed

by Foreign Minister Morshed Khan and Pak Science and IT Minister Nouraiz Shakoor.

Earlier Khaleda visited an earthquake relief camp, about 15-km from the city centre in the Pakistani capital, where 10,784 of the quakeaffected people have been shel-

ties and situation of the camp which is jointly run by the government NGOs, Turkey, Kuwait and Red

The chairman of the H-11 Relief

Camp, Kamran Lashari, briefed the

prime minister about overall facili-

Fuel prices hiked

meeting amidst reports from the predominantly agricultural northern region that boro cultivation is being severely affected due to irrigation problem owing to supply shortage of

adequate fuel supply in the market, the energy adviser pointed his finger at smuggling of petroleum products across the border and convened a meeting tomorrow to combat the Mahmudur Rahman attributed

power-driven irrigation pumps into diesel-run ones. Our Bogra correspondent Hasibur Rahman last night reported that over 300 tank lorries used to carry fuel from Baghabari daily but barely 50 lorries now carry that from the makeshift Kazirhat depot, which

The energy ministry decided yesterday that petrol pump owners n the northern districts from now on would be allowed to take fuel from any depot in the country to meet the demand and meet the additional transport cost from the increased

the principal source for supply of fuel to the northern region until the situation at Baghabari depot mproved. At the meeting, leaders of

They denied allegations of hoarding by petrol pump owners, saying that during the last couple of weeks they could provide only 60 percent of fuel needs in the region due to supply shortage.

due to the switchover of power-run rrigation pumps to diesel-run ones. Mahmudur Rahman said 80.000 tonnes of fuel is in government stock right now, the BPC refinery has 30,000 tonnes and another

He attributed at least 30 percent of the rise in diesel demand to power

Meanwhile, Agricultural Affairs Secretary of the main opposition Awami League Dr Abdur Razzak, MP. resented the latest price hike of fuel, particularly diesel, when boro growers badly require it for irrigating heir cropland.

Power Secretary ANM Akther Hossain said the Power

Kongkon Karmaker reports that 3.37.000 litres of diesel. 2.17.000 litres of kerosene and 17,000 litres of petrol are in stock at Parbatipur depot. It can store 12 lakh 60 thousand litres of petrol, 12 lakh 60 thousand litres of diesel and 12 lakh 60 thousand litres of kerosene

Scarcity of diesel is more acute in

bordering districts where farmers are restricted from procuring diesel despite getting certified by local Union Parishad chairmen that they would use it for irrigation purpose. Suspicion of smuggling mounted

Our staff reporter in Raishah Anwar Ali reports that the entire district went almost without diesel in the last two days but traders hinted at fresh supply from today.

the miseries of boro farmers.

Defiant Iran FROM PAGE 12

resume uranium enrichment even

before the UN watchdog

nternational Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) meets next month in Vienna to decide whether to recommend UN Security Council action against Tehran. A semi-official Iranian news agency announced Monday the 'imminent" removal of the seals and

cameras from the country's main

uranium enrichment plant in Natanz that had been under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency "Today or tomorrow, 12 inspectors from the IAEA... will lift the seals on the factory in Natanz and some of the conversion installations in Isfahan to permit the resumption of

their activities," a "well-informed source" told the Fars news agency. "Finally, they are going to remove the surveillance cameras that had been installed in Natanz and

Isfahan."

cascade.

The diplomats' comments in Vienna appear to show Iran is following through with its threat. "Iran has put gas into centrifuges at its pilot enrichment plant in

The diplomat, who asked not to

be named due to the sensitivity of

Natanz." a diplomat said.

the issue, said Iran had not yet fired up the whole 164-centrifuge cascade but had "over the past two or three days" started work with some centrifuges. A second diplomat said Iran was doing "preliminary work" with

"stand-alone" centrifuges, almost

certainly putting uranium gas into

single machines rather than a whole

The diplomat said this was

necessary in a step-by-step approach involving first getting centrifuges running, then operating a pilot plant, which Iran has dubbed research, and then moving on to industrial-scale enrichment with thousands of centrifuges. Iran says its nuclear programme

is a peaceful effort to generate

electricity and that it only wants to produce low enriched uranium. which is not refined enough for weapons use. But it wants to install over 50,000 centrifuges at Natanz, an array which could produce enough highly

enriched uranium every two or three

Iran had suspended uranium

enrichment until talks with an EU negotiating troika, aimed at winning guarantees that the programme is peaceful, broke down last month. Since August, though, it has been making the feedstock UF6 at a

weeks for one atom bomb.

conversion plant in Isfahan. The West has seemed ready to let Tehran continue with this work. which technically is part of nuclear fuel activities the EU says should be suspended, as long as the Islamic Republic did not actually enrich. Asked Monday in Tehran whether Iran would wait for the

March 6 IAEA board of governors' meeting to resume industrial-scale enrichment, government spokesman Gholam Hossein Elham told

Khasru moved for the petitioner. Respondents of the rule are judge Chunnu.

The petitioner submitted that

Kishoregani Sadar constituency. This has been done in a clear

Section 907 of the rules reads:

reporters "No, No.'

diesel and power. While traders blamed the government for its failure to ensure

the current fuel problem to nonoperation of Baghabari oil depot due to loss of navigability of the adjacent river and switching over of many

is too meagre to meet the demand in the entire northern region.

It was also decided that Khulna petroleum depot would operate as

Bangladesh Petroleum Dealers-Distributors Agents and Petrol Pump Owners Association blamed government inefficiency for the fuel crisis during the peak boro cultivation season.

Petrol pump owners said the average daily demand for diesel in the northern region has increased to 17,000 tonnes from 10,000 tonnes

1,20,000 tonnes are in pipeline to add the stock. shortage.

"Even the slightest price rise of diesel would hit hard the farmers who are already in distress due to continued shortage of diesel and erratic power supply from the very onset of peak boro season," he said.

Development Board (PDB) yesterday spoke of a serious crisis in running power plants because of acute fuel crises in the northern

Our Dinajpur correspondent

Bilateral FTA Addressing the House, the opposition lawmakers demanded a discus-

sion on the Kansat killing and a proper investigation into the assaspress conference was apprised.

statement.

the talks between her and her Pak counterpart as well as official talks extremely fruitful. "We have made an assessment of the existing multifaceted cooper-