BAC meeting

decided that no discussion will be held on any specific issue [demanded by

The opposition members also demanded discussion on the crises of diesel, fertiliser and power, corruption, law and order situation, murder of a Rajshahi University professor, August 21 grenade attack and the Kibria killing case. But none of issues was included in the agenda due to stiff resistance from the ruling party members.

The opposition lawmakers had submitted a total of 131 notices to the Parliament Secretariat demanding discussions on theses issues follow-

of the Jatiya Sangsad. The speaker will formally disposed of all the

The BAC meeting however unanimously decided to extend the tenure of the current session for another five workdays. The sitting, which was adjourned yesterday, will resume on February 22 to run until February 28.

On the concluding day, Leader of the House Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina will take part in discussion on the president's

makers' demand for holding discussion on various issues, the speaker said they will have the scopes to discuss the issues while participating in the discussion on thanks giving motion on the president's speech

minister.

"The ministers will reply to such questions during discussion on the thanks giving motion," the speaker told reporters emerging from the meeting "They [AL lawmakers] can discuss all the issues in the thanks giving discus-

also discuss their reform proposals, if they want. But no discussion on any specific issue will be held," he said.

Replying to the reporters' queries LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan explained that usually no general discussion is held in parliament during discussion on the thanks giving motion on the presi-

But the AL lawmakers did not agree with the BAC decision not to hold any discussion and said they had been forced to raise the issues for people's interest. They also said the ruling party members rejected the demands violating the Rules of Procedure.

"It will be a bad precedent for the House if it does not hold any discussion on issues like grenade attack on the leader of the opposition and assassination of lawmaker Shah AMS Kibria." Suraniit Sengupta, who ioined the BAC meeting as the representative of the opposition leader, told reporters after the meeting.

"For the greater interest of the nation, we wanted discussion on the price spiral of essentials, unbridled corruption of the government and the rise of militancy," he said. "We also demanded discussion on the killing of nine people by police at Kansat."

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdul Hamid said they demanded continuation of the current session up to March with 15 more workdays. "The ruling party finally agreed to extend the session up to February 28 with five more workdays," he told reporters.

Opposition Chief Whip Abdus Shahid said they demanded that the opposition lawmakers should be given half the time allocated for discussion on the thanks giving motion.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina, two vital members of the committee, did not attend vesterday's meeting of the BAC that also decided that there will be no private members' day on Thursday (Feb 23). Besides, no call attention notices will be tabled on the remaining workdays.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed, KM Obaidur Rahman, Agriculture Minister MK Anwar and Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain also attended the meeting. Maulana Abdus Sobhan was present on behalf of Industries Minister Matiur Rahman Nizami

_ater, a separate circle, known

as Mong circle was formed with an

area of Ramgarh and Khagrachar

subdivision. In the course of time

their obedience, determination and

social activities turned them from

circle chiefs to the kings of the

although they do not have any

pays the kings for performing their

responsibilities. According to the

direction of the state they do the

social judgment for the ethnic minor-

ities and deposit revenues to the

state bank that is collected from the

not only as a programme for reve-

nue collection, but also as a meeting

irrespective of castes and creeds.

Pakistan ratifies

between zero and five percent within

seven years. Agreed in 2004, it is due

Its least developed countries

Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and the

Maldives - have 10 years to complete

the process, though all members can

maintain a list of sensitive products on

The trade pact was first mooted in

1995 by the seven-nation South Asian

Association for Regional Cooperation

(Saarc), an economic grouping

formed to reduce poverty, promote

Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, who

to come into force by July 2006.

which tariffs will not be reduced.

trade and fight terrorism.

Water woes

community.

queue for hours for a pitcher of

meet their cooking needs, the

rehabilitated people said. The

unhealthy condition is threatening to

take its toll on the health of the entire

lack of preparedness from the Dhaka

City Corporation (DCC) authorities

part while rehabilitating the commu-

lakh to prepare the land and install

tube-wells in the area.

The crisis started with the utter

The DCC however spent Tk 50

water with which they can not even

FROM PAGE 20

At present, Raj Punnah serves

The people respect the kings

The government of Bangladesh

Kaptai subdivision.

ngdom or soldiers

Raj Punnah festival

Bomong circle." The source, however, did not mention the reason about not holding the fair.

Local people said that the recent countrywide serial bomb blasts and the fundamentalist threat on the cultural activities caused to post-

109 Mouzas and about 900 karbaris will pay their allegiance to the king, also the circle chief, with annual Jhum tax and traditional gifts.

Tomorrow the king would meet the headmen and karbaris and have lunch with them according to the tradition after which the celebration of Rai Punnah will end.

In the reign of 9th Bomong King Sa Neuin Nyo (1875-1901) the

part of Kaptai subdivision while the Bomong circle was established with Bandarban, Lama and the rest of

trial," because this was a requirement under international human rights accord. "or release them without further delay.

"Consideration should also be given to trying suspected terrorists before a competent international tribunal," it added.

The document, a draft version of which was leaked earlier this week. charged that US treatment of detainees violated their rights to physical and mental health and in

chaired the cabinet meeting, said Pakistan wanted peace with India some cases amounted to torture. which has already ratified the trade Washington rejected the draft version as making a "baseless

"But at the same time wants the assertion", saying its authors had core issue of Jammu and Kashmir be never visited the prison which resolved in line with aspirations of the houses mainly detainees captured people of Jammu and Kashmir," an in Afghanistan after the September official statement quoted Aziz as 11. 2001, attacks on the United

treaties to get around their ban on torture.

the framework of the struggle against terrorism in order to allow certain interrogation techniques that would not be permitted under the internationally accepted definition of torture are of utmost concern," it

"The confusion with regard to authorized and unauthorized interrogation techniques over the last years is particularly alarming.

9 killed, 29 hurt

FROM PAGE 20

critical wounds was committed to the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital while 17 others were admitted to the Companygani Upazila Health Complex. The rest were released after giving first aids.

Medical officer of the health complex Dr Obaidul Haque said the victims died of heart failure caused by the high-voltage electric waves.

tion with the Chamber Judge's Court on Tuesday. Chamber judge referred the matter to the regular bench yester-

injunction Monday after SC lawyer Khairul Alam filed a writ petition accusing Chunnu of taking part in activities of the rulina BNP.

the government, asking it to show cause in two weeks why it should not be asked to take action against the divisional judge. TH Khan, counsel for Chunnu,

submitted before the court that the HC niunction amounts to violating his fundamental rights and natural justice.

anyone on the basis of newspaper reports," Khan told reporters yesterday, adding that the injunction came in response to a writ petition filed on the basis of some newspaper reports.

He argued before the court that many people accompany ministers for development works in their areas.

"Justices like you too have done this. Anyone can work for develop-

showcause notice and action taken against him after an investigation on receipt of his reply, Khan told the court.

the writ petitioner, said both the HC and SC have constitutional obligations to preserve the sanctity of the judiciary by controlling the subordinate courts.

The HC has rightly discharged its duties by granting an injunction against Chunnu while issuing a rule on him and the government, he added.

2 journalists

FROM PAGE 20 journalists were assigned to collect nformation on drug trading in the

hurled three bombs at the Daily Mathabhanga office.

In a separate incident, a gang of bombs at Pirpurgoraghat field criminals in the district following the (SP) of Chuadanga told The Daily

Farmers forced

FROM PAGE 20

Our Sirajganj correspondent

price of fertilisers in the district as dishonest dealers have created a crisis in the market by hoarding is fixed at Tk 290-295.

however, denied any fertiliser crisis. The diesel was reported to have been selling at Tk 36 in Gaibandha,

Tk 40-45 in Rangpur, Tk 38 in Rajshahi, and Tk 33-37 in Bogra. A team of Agriculture Extension Department (AED) will monitor the

Deputy Director Abdul Matin. land is likely to remain uncultivated in Chapainawabgani as diesel crisis

and erratic power supply continue. The district AED said only 33,885

FROM PAGE 1 percent of the 'compromise amount'.

About yesterday's BB circular, Centre for Policy Dialogue Executive

The pressure of handing out new loans will mainly fall on the nationalised commercial banks (NCBs), as the numbers of loan defaulters are the highest with them, Debapriya pointed out. "It is not consistent with the current reform programme of the NCBs."

one of the windows of the pre-election financing is being open through this," ne quipped. former director of any bank, the new

policy demands that he take a prior approval of the BB for obtaining any fresh loan In an instant reaction, Pubali Bank Managing Director Khandker Ibrahim Khaled told The Daily Star last night,

"This new loan rescheduling policy will derange the orderliness achieved by the previous one." changed the policy under pressure

from the businessmen," he said, adding the policy change could be justified if repayment of at least 75 percent of the rescheduled loan was set as the condition for getting fresh

"The elected governments typically remain strict during the early years of their tenure, but start to knuckle under various pressures during the fag end," Khandkernoted.

Better ties with donors

Foundation (PKSF), said

Bangladesh's economy has grown

five to six percent a year but this is not

enough. He stressed increased

including power and transportation,

and inefficient operation of Chittagong

port are some of the constraints to

Sobhan said the government needs in

house financial and legal expertise for

human resource development for

foreign investment and job creation.

He also emphasised free movement

A section of government officials

welcomes foreign direct investment

nership in taking the country forward,

Action Aid, said, "We have enjoyed a

modest five percent economic growth

but there is still a huge gap and chil-

dren are facing extreme malnutrition

Wrapping up the discussion,

Mahfuz Anam said administering a

country is a serious business and it

requires experience, honesty, commit-

"Our ministers and high-level policy

makers must acquire knowledge and

expertise to run their respective minis-

tries. Giving speeches, making com-

mitments and talking about big plans

do not make a country grow," he

noted, governance has become a

highly technical affair for which techni-

Participating in the open discus-

sion earlier. Angela Gomes, executive

director of Banchte Shekha, said,

'Poor women do not have any idea

how they can export their products and

they lack technical skill. We have to

find out areas where we can develop

A Rouf Chowdhury, director of the

Federation of Bangladesh Chambers

of Commerce and Industry, said

Bangladesh has succeeded in secur-

ing new markets but it is facing supply

"We should pursue movement of

skilled and semi-skilled manpower

though most of the European Union

countries are not in favour of it," he

said. "But UK is different from others

Bangladesh. The situation is similar in

ADB, said aid should facilitate trade,

and developing countries should be in

the driving seats for formulating poli-

partnership has started to get a

of Democracy Watch, underscored

improving the quality of education and

a proper monitoring system for it.

Talea Rehman, executive director

The poor will remain poor unless

Regarding commonwealth

approach to monitor election in

Bangladesh, Saber said they have

welcomed the proposal. He said

monitoring only on the election day will

"This is a partnership and new

Hua Du, country director of the

many other countries.

know-how and technology. '

cal qualities must be acquired.

In a modern world Mahfuz Anam

Nasreen Huq, country director of

of labourers for job opportunities.

he pointed out.

due to poverty.

ment and expertise.

observed.

Former foreign secretary Farooq

But inadequate infrastructure

foreign investment in the country.

increasing investment, he said.

FROM PAGE 20 countries, under which products excepting arms (EBA) can enter

Europe duty free, he pointed out. The economist also urged the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to take an initiative to provide support to enterprises for divesting equity.

He suggested the government to offer financial support to small tea gardens for setting up a unit for processing tea as their products now sell well below the market price. Economist Hossain Zillur Rahman

said the Asian nations also should tell the world its wonderful success stories so that other countries can benefit

He however expressed concern over inequality and insecurity of growth. "We need unhindered fruits of growth"

He noted that after overcoming some extreme poverty problems, Bangladesh is now poised to address new types of challenges. In his welcome address, David

Wood, country representative of the DFID, said Bangladesh is no longer aid-dependent and it is time to develop a new kind of partnership with the development community that goes beyond traditional donor-recipient

These new partnerships will be 'longer-term and broader-based,' he said. They might cover issues such as trade, climate change, reform of international organisations, migration and private sector finance as well as donor projects and programmes. Wood further said Bangladesh is in

a position to move away from being dictated by its international development partners, and towards a broader and deeper development relationship. He pointed out Bangladesh's

successes in different fields including

macro-economic stability, positive economic growth for 30 years, expansion of micro-finance and vast network Primary school enrolment is approaching 100 percent, which is one of the highest rates particularly for girls,

in the developing world. Bangladesh also achieved success in health sector and in bringing down infant and child mortality faster than in any other developing country, Wood said. According to him, the existing relations between Bangladesh and donors have been evolving with the

The London conference would give an opportunity to share ideas on how to accelerate poverty reduction in

In his keynote paper, Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, president of Bangladesh Economic Association (BEĂ), said poor governance in Bangladesh is a much-discussed issue. There is a lack of transparency and accountability while corruption is pervasive both within the government and in various sectors of the economy

various types of virtuous partnerships towards accelerating poverty reduction but it needs to dismantle the vicious ones which promote corruption, mismanagement, and extremism in the country, he stressed.

The country achieved a respectable annual average 5.3 percent GDF growth since mid-1990s but it is certainly not high when compared to East Asian tigers and China, he mentioned.

The BEA president noted that the growth achieved has however been lopsided and income distribution has in fact steeply worsened. Even if income distribution is improved, it is necessary to accelerate economic growth to gear up poverty reduction, he observed. Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed, managing

director of Palli Karma-Sahayak

As part of his three-nation South

Asia tour, McKinnon arrived in

Bangladesh from India yesterday and

will go to Pakistan on the last leg of his

The secretary general apprised the

He appreciated Bangladesh's

success in a number of fields, particu-

larly health, education, poverty reduc-

tion and achieving a number of UN

Millennium Development Goals

"Bangladesh can be a model for

other countries in various social

development and educational

programmes," he was quoted as

good relations with Commonwealth

and it will help the country in capacity-

building training, education and trade

Our Staff Correspondent reported that

McKinnon also met the Leader of the

Opposition and Awami League (AL)

President Sheikh Hasina at her Sudha

Sadan residence and discussed

different issues including law and

order situation of the country, militancy,

electoral reforms, corruption and good

C'wealth secretary general about their

proposals for reforming the caretaker

government system and the Election

Commission to ensure a free and fair

Political Secretary Saber Hossain

Chowdhury said they have explained

the C'wealth secretary general about

their concern over a free, fair and

Briefing the journalists, Hasina's

The AL chief explained the

was also present at the meeting.

MEET WITH HASINA

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan

McKinnon said Bangladesh has

saying during the meeting.

and commerce

governance.

general election.

neutral election.

prime minister of the outcome of the

last Commonwealth Summit held in

2007 general election.

All 5 accused

Malitha alias Dada Tapan, Rafiqul Islam Hitler, Moniruzzaman Jamal, Golam Hossain Akash and Zafar, Of them, Hitler was present in the dock, while four others are still at large.

The court acquitted the accused, as charges brought against them were not proved, said the prosecution lawver. Mir Elias Hossain Dilip, editor of the

Jhenidah-based daily, Bir Darpan, and his associate Alfazuddin were shot dead by the underground operatives on the night of January 15, 2000 at a shop at Pagla Kanai Road in the district town. Mir Badrul Alam, elder brother of

Dilip, filed a murder case with Jhenidah Sadar Police Station the following day, naming none as accused of the double murder. Officer-in-charge (OC) of the

(FDI) but many others discourage it. police station submitted the chargesheet to a court here on April 14, The second generation of 2001. The case was transferred to the Speedy Trail Tribunal on August Bangladeshis in the UK who run 4 last year. around 10,000 restaurants should This is the second verdict in come forward for a meaningful part-

Journalist murder case delivered yesterday by the Judge of the Speedy Trial Tribunal, Khulna. The first verdict in journalist Haroon murder case was given by the tribunal on February 7, acquitting all the three charge-sheeted accused due to weak evidence.

Railway cancels FROM PAGE 20

Chandpur-Laksham (2 trains), Sylhet-Chhatak (2 trains), Dhaka-Mymensingh-Mohanganj (2 trains) and Dhaka-Bhoirab-Mymensingh (2)

Sources said BR would be able to buy diesel and meet demands for next 20 to 30 days with the present cash reserves.

BR might not be able to buy diesel for the month of March and April unless the government disburses money soon. In that case BR would be forced to go for austerity measures and suspend services of few more routes, they said. BR needs over 2,00,000 litres of

eastern zone and government gives Tk 50 crore annually to purchase the The hike of diesel price in recent months has put BR eastern zone in

diesel to run its 150 trains in the

difficulty as it can not buy fuel at the previous rate. The price of diesel increased about 33 percent and we need additional Tk 20 crore to operate." M Mahtab Uddin, chief finance advisor

and chief accounts officer of BR told

reporters yesterday. He said he sent a letter to the communication and finance ministries seeking the additional fund but the ministries expressed inability to disburse the money and asked for austerity measure to cope with the

where we have a significant number of "We decided to suspend the 16 our population, and it is a solid ground insignificant routes for the time being. If we get additional money to Quazi Mesbahuddin Ahmed, buy diesel then we may consider reopening of the routes," Mahtab Planning Commission member, said there is a lack of appropriate data in analysing overall poverty situation in

Dollar price

FROM PAGE 1 banks and the price hike of oil and other commodities in the international market

The inter-h transactions amounted to just \$150,000 yesterday, said a banking

A huge supply-demand gap of foreign currency has emerged, because some new-generation banks opened too many letters of credit without considering their foreign currency earnings or the foreign currency supply in the interbank market, Bangladesh Bank observed on Sunday.

But, private and foreign bankers refuted the central bank's diagnosis. They said previously the nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) were the main suppliers of foreign currency in the market. But, due to over-expenditures for oil import in the last one year they have run dry of foreign currency and turned into buyers themselves.

The BB too has stopped injecting foreign currency into the market resulting in the present crisis, they argued. The bankers termed the central bank's blame on newgeneration banks a politically motivated statement, as, they claimed rather some first- and secondgeneration banks are suffering more from poor asset management and forex shortfall.

BPC to borrow

FROM PAGE 20

\$1.54 billion for some 3.8 million metric tons of fuel. In the current fiscal year, the ministry estimates, the expenditure will be to the tune of Of the estimated import cost, the

IDB would provide \$700 million, the energy ministry said in the proposal. As the BPC already owes some Tk 80 billion to the nationalised commercia banks (NCBs) in outstanding loans and due to a worsening foreign currency scarcity, the NCBs have 'expressed reluctance' to offer any more money to the BPC, it explained Bangladesh Bank too has refused to lend in order to avoid any further depletion of the already hardpressed foreign exchange reserve, it

Against this backdrop, the energy ministry sought approval to borrow from the private sector to meet a part of the remaining amount needed to meet the country's import needs of petroleum.

StanChart offers the \$250 million loan on the condition of its repayment within nine months from the date of disbursement. The energy ministry expects to get the money within 30 to 40 days, Energy Adviser Mahmudur Rahman told the press after the cabinet committee meet

Mercury goes up

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, also in charge of the power ministry, was not in the House when the lawmakers were clamouring for power yesterday.

Acknowledging the countrywide shortfall in power supply, Iqbal Hasan Mahmud placed a district-wise list of demand and supply. It shows that supply is less than half of the demand during peak-hours. The minister, however, said he

nopes the situation will start changing for the better at the end of March when several power plants will resume production after overhauling. In the power-hungry northern region, the situation in Bogra is better

than that in the other districts. The minister said supply in the district was In Narsingdi, the supply is equal to the demand, which is 48 MW a day, he

Replying to the main opposition Awami League (AL) lawmaker Sayedul Haq, he said the countrywide demand for power currently stands at 4,400 MW while production capacity of the power plants ranges between 3.500 to 3700 MW, given that all plants

are in operation. The daily supply in Lalmonirhat was only nine MW against the demand of 19 MW, Iqbal said, answering a query from Mujibur Rahman, a Jatiya Party (Ershad) lawmaker from the northern district.

"The power supply in the district continues for not more than two hours a day," the JP lawmaker said, calling for an immediate solution to the problem for the sake of agricultural produc-

The state minister claimed that the power situation in the northern districts nas improved after Boropukuria Thermal Power Station went into operation on Tuesday AL lawmaker Mirza Azam said the

power crisis will cost the ruling BNP the next election. He alleged that the present government has failed to add a single MW of power to the national grid due mainly to corruption by the Hawa Bhaban men. BNP lawmaker MA Hashem from Noakhali began the onslaught of

queries. He wanted to know from the minister the situation in his district. In reply, the minister informed the House that supply during the peakhours in the district is 21.75 MW against a demand of 51.10 MW.

Responding to another question from BNP lawmaker SA Sultan from Chandpur, he said, "The present peakhour supply in Chandpur is 21 MW while the demand is 45 MW."

the demand is 60 MW. JP (Ershad) lawmaker Moshiur Rahman Ranga said farmers and

traders in his constituency have been agitating for power. A local market already observed a strike to press for the demand. He asked the minister to withdraw minimum charges for power if the authorities fail to ensure the

supply. in reply, Iqbal said, "Supply in Rangpur was 70 MW on Tuesday against the demand of 150 MW. We agree that power is in short supply during the peak-hours and for this we'll have to go for equal distribution in all areas."

Enamul Haq, the main opposition lawmaker from Habigani, said, "Power plants use gas of my area for production, but unfortunately the district has to experience an acute power short-

The minister informed the House that daily demand in the district is 19.53 MW when the supply does not

BNP lawmaker Rashiduzzaman Millat from Jamalpur spoke about a miserably inadequate power supply in his district. The minister agreed with the lawmaker's account of the situation and told the House that on Tuesday supply in the district came down to nine MW against the demand of 24

Another ruling BNP lawmaker Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anny urged labal to ensure uninterrupted power supply in the days leading to the SSC

session, the deputy speaker without giving any reason adjourned the sitting 11:00am of February 22. The announcement took the opposition lawmakers by surprise.

Later, LGRD and Co-operatives inister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan told the newsmen that the sitting was adjourned due to a dinner hosted by Bangladesh Rifles

FROM PAGE 20

The idea is to put the Palestinians on a diet but not make them die of hunger," prime ministerial adviser Dov Weisglass was quoted as saying

lower chamber of the US Congress approved the measure by a voice vote of 418 to one. The Senate has vet to vote on the measure.

The move came as the White House considers cutting aid to the Hamas-led Palestinian government, after the militant Islamist organisation won a shock landslide victory in Palestinian legislative elections on

RMG export thrives

Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA),

their marketing drive in the US during the MFA regime due to the quota system, he added.

The International Monetary Fund

percent of its export to the US markets. Warnings from the IMF and the WTO were not taken lightly at home and abroad. Bangladesh RMG products last

year faced severe competition in the European Union where performance remained almost static growing only \$30 million in the first 11 months of last

When woven export to the EU dipped by 17.24 percent or \$300 million, knitwear recorded the same 17.44 percent or \$330 million growth during the period.

"Structural changes are taking

place favouring our knit items. Bangladesh has so far done well but should not be complacent. Quota free regime is also an opportunity for us,'

systems are undergoing major changes and it would take couple of years to settle, he said.

utilise generalised system of preference (GSP) facility due to strong backward linkage support, he said, adding, increasing local value addition apart, backward linkage is also helping reduce the lead-time

Knitwear exporters are able to

have rose by 20 percent during January-November last year. "As the US has imposed safeguard measures against Chinese exports until 2008. our exporters are using the opportunity "he explained

needs to strengthen backward and forward linkage industries in the woven sub-sector, he added.

FROM PAGE 1 market," said Lokman.

The SS Norway, launched in 1960 as the SS France, has been docked in open waters off the Malaysian port

Earlier, reports were published that global environmentalist group Greenpeace has included the SS Norway on a watchlist of 50 vessels, which it fears, will not be decontaminated before being scrapped. It says the French workers who

built the ship claim it contains 1,250 tonnes of materials that contain asbestos, which poses danger to human health and environment.

Breaking Yard. The Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association has served legal

brought into Bangladeshi waters. ships, mostly oil tankers, every year. Operating on beaches at Sitakundu,

ng over his weekend state visit. "Chirac orders toxic ship back French president clears the air ahead

Indian Ocean would lift a cloud hang-

of his India visit." reads the headline

splashed on the front page of the

country's leading daily, the Times of The Hindu newspaper said in its report: "The announcement has saved both Paris and New Delhi a degree of embarrassment since Mr. Chirac is to begin a 24-hour state visit to India on

Sunday [February 19]." Chirac's decision on February 15 marked a big win for environmentalists in both countries, who argued that sending the decommissioned warship Clemenceau to India for scrapping posed a serious environmental and nealth hazard.

The president's announcement

came after France's highest administrative court ordered the ship's transfer to be called off in response to legal action by Greenpeace and three antiasbestos groups.

breaking yard Alang in the western state of Guiarat, now is moored outside of India's territorial waters.

Most sea-going ships end their service at shipyards in India, Bangladesh, China and Pakistan, where activists say they are cut up by unprotected workers, taking a grim toll on human health and environment.

chaired the meeting, said the BAC has

the opposition lawmakers].

ing the Rules of Procedure

The House will sit twice on each day.

About the main opposition law-

As their demand for discussion on specific issues were rejected by the ruling party, the AL lawmakers at the BAC meeting asked who will reply to any questions about failure of any ministry or allegation against any

"The opposition lawmakers can

In the opening day of the Raj Punnah festival, the headmen of

celebration of the festival started. During the British rule. the whole Chittagong Hill Tracts was divided into two parts for collecting tax in 1804. The Chakma circle was founded with ancient Ramgarh, Khagrachhari, Rangamati and a

UN calls FROM PAGE 1

States. In the final version of the report released in Geneva, the UN rapporteurs also charged Washington with violating international human rights

"Attempts by the United States administration to redefine 'torture' in

The community built, on their own, tin-shed homes for themselves. The area along the embankment is vet to come under Wasa's water supply network. WASA officials at Zone-4 in Mirpur said it might take years to get the area under its supply network. They said the only solution is to install deep tube-wells Molla Ansarul Haque, a DCC

engineer at Zone-7 told The Daily Star his office did not receive any complaint about the crisis. "Sometimes we have had complaints about some out-of-order tube-wells but I have not heard about the contamination of water," he added.

SC rejects

being a sitting judge, filed the peti-

An HC division bench imposed the

The HC bench also issued a rule on

"No steps can be taken against

ment of his or her areas, as did Chunnu. But it will have to be looked at from a judicial point of view," he He could have been served with a

Dr Kamal Hossain, who stood for

On July 13 last year criminals

10-12 criminals exploded three around 12:30pm following a feud over a meeting. None was injured in the incident. Police and Rapid Action Battalion started a hunt for incidents, superintendent of police

reports: Power supply halved over the last few days, severely hampering irrigation of the boro fields in nine upazilas of Sirajganj. The low voltage of electricity has also damaged Farmers also complained of high

fertilisers and raising the price. A 50kg sack of urea is selling at Tk 320-330 while the government rate The district administration,

situation of boro farming in Gaibandha from todav, said AED

BDNEWS adds: Half the boro

nectare land of the targeted 57,500 hectares could be cultivated.

BB goes soft

Director Debapriya Bhattacharya said the step does not go with the present monetary policy. "It also undermines the integrity of the ongoing financial sector reforms." he observed.

If the loan defaulter is a present or

"Many would also suspect whether

"I suspect the central bank has

Saber said they have also pointed out the differences between the elections held under a caretaker government in the past and the upcoming one.

completion of the poverty reduction strategy and hosting of the PRS implementation forum late last year.

and in the society. Bangladesh can make use of

governance is improved, she said. McKinnon pins hope

> not be fruitful. "We think that election is a process, which has already begun and early monitoring will be helpful for our electoral process," he added. "We have discussed about corruption, militancy, good governance and the overall law and order situation of

the country. We think that there is a

connection between the election and

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil,

Kazi Zafrullah. Sved Abul Hossain

these issues," Saber said.

former ambassador Mohammad Zia Uddin, were, among others, present at the meeting. Talking to the diplomatic correspondents after a meeting with Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan yesterday, the visiting Commonwealth secretary general described the caretaker form of government as very acceptable and hoped the next elections will be held under the system that

conducted the last three successive

Bangladesh has established a very

acceptable system of a caretaker form

"What we do know is that

parliamentary polls in Bangladesh.

of government that has worked for three times. Obviously, that will happen again." he said. "In any society when an election is pending, election emerging, people get excited... that's a good sign... good sign of democracy that people want to get involved, that people want to be

active," he said replying to a question.

On another question about the issues he discussed with the foreign minister, the secretary general said regional and bilateral issues, including Commonwealth programmes in the

Saleq Chowdhury, BNP lawmaker from Naogaon, told the House that his district gets only 18 MW a day when

told The Daily Star. Phasing out of quota system is helping Bangladesh grow even more, he said. Exporters did not strengthen

(IMF) ahead of the free trade regime warned that a quarter of Bangladesh's export and a huge number of jobs could vanish in 2005. The World Trade Organisation (WTO) had also forecast that Bangladesh might lose up to 50

Penang for months awaiting a buyer as no-one was willing to buy it due to a warning of Greenpeace.

notices on relevant government agencies in a bid to halt the ship being Ship-breaking yards in Bangladesh dismantle more than 80

they indirectly employ some 300,000 Meanwhile, quoting different Indian newspapers yesterday, AFP reports that French President Jacques Chirac's move to order home an

exceed 11.38 MW.

Soon after the question-answer

US House

at the meeting by public radio. In Washington, lawmakers in the

observed Prof Mustafizur Rahman, research director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD). Global production and buying

Woven exports in the US markets

Compliance issue is becoming crucial and it will have cost implications. Exploring new markets and looking more on diversification with high value items apart, Bangladesh

Govt bans toxic ship

Following newspaper reports. dozens of environmentalists formed a human chain in Chittagong to protest against the move to dismantle the ship at Hossain's Giri Subedar Ship

asbestos-lined warship from the

The boat, which was to be dismantled at the world's biggest ship-

The upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of Companyganj said steps were being taken to send the bodies to the village homes of the victims.