Kafco to set up

"We have met with the Board of Investment (BoI) executive chairman and informally discussed the investment plan with him." May said. He said the government will be

happy because the country needs more fertilizer. "There is certainly a shortage of

urea in Bangladesh and the demand is growing. The national annual demand for fertilizer is growing at a five to six percent rate.

Kafco has a fully established infrastructure enabling it to expand with shorter implementation time than other investors, he added.

The company started its operation in 1995, with a plant which has the capacity of producing about 1,700 tonnes of urea and 1,500 tonnes of ammonia a day, in a joint venture with the Government of Bangladesh and companies of Japan, Denmark and the

government as gas price in the fiscal 2004-05 in an average rate of \$2.34

million in the fiscal 2004-05, which is a record among the Bangladeshi corporate houses, May claimed saying that the company paid off all

dividend to its shareholders in

shortage

300 MW last night. Against the demand of over 1,300 MW the supply was around 1,000 MW

Though the Dhaka Electricity and Supply Authority (Desa) yesterday evening increased the supply than that of the previous day, it could not give power to many city suburbs. "We had to shift the electricity supply from one area to other for maintaining the allocated load-

closed include 360-MW Haripur, Raozan unit-1, 100-MW Tongi, 45-MW Baghabari, and 35-MW Shambhuganj

Our staff correspondent in Chittagong reports: With power supply being erratic in the last few days, the port city seems set to slip into an acute power crisis at the beginning of the dry season.

A load-shedding of 120 MW on average a day is already causing sufferings to the city dwellers and hampering production in different

The power situation in Chittagong started deteriorating since No 1 unit of the 420-MW Raozan power plant suspended production for overhauling on February 13

It affected generation at unit No. 2 of the same plant and thus forced shedding immediately.

Burge Mounted Plant suspended generation and Shikalbaha 60-MW Thermal Power Plant failed to go for full production due to gas crisis over the last three days.

At present, the production of power in the four plants of Chittagong came down to some 250

from the national grid, the authorities could now supply some 350MW power against the demand of at least 470 MW, sources said.

Sources in PDB, Chittagong said the production at unit no 1 of Raozan plant would resume in a couple of days and after that, the

EU team

The RHIYA projects, which Began in 2003, were being implemented in seven countries including Bangladesh, Cambodia, Laos, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Vietnam focusing sexual and reproductive health for adolescents and

Speaker Barrister Jamir Uddin Sircar, Finance and Planning Minister Saifur Rahman and State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman and discuss matters of cooperation in different fields.

used as a precaution against bird flu

As suggestion to the people, Dr

farms in Bangladesh, one of the world's most densely populated countries

threat to us. But we are careful enough so that the virus does not spread in our country's poultry sector." said Md Abu Siddique Secretary General of Bangladesh

February, 43 percent of which went to the government exchequer.

'Kafco successfully paid off its debts and offered dividends to its shareholders due to a rise in fertilizer prices across the world," May said adding, "The average fertilizer price was \$70 per tonne a few years back which now rose to \$230 per tonne in the international market."

The top executive of Kafco said the company paid \$25 million in forms of taxes and duties and injected another \$70 million into the economy of Bangladesh in forms of wages, services and contracts.

Asked about raising fund from the local capital market. May said the company has a plan to do that in

"The issue has been discussed in the last board meeting," he said adding that Bangladeshi capital market is developing day by day and it needs more shares from good

Kafco produced 685,214 tonnes of urea and 549.973 tonnes of ammonia in 2004-05 fiscal, about half of which were supplied to the Bangladesh government under an export formula.

The company also sells fertilizer to Australia. Thailand. Vietnam. Pakistan and India

Ekushey Padak

journalism, and Aftab Ahmed of The

Daily Ittefaq in photojournalism. A cabinet committee on the national award proposed a list of 17 personalities including five ministers on February 2 for Ekushev Padak.

The five ministers whose names ere proposed for their contributions to their respective fields are Health and Family Welfare Minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Education Minister Osman Faruq, Science, Information and Communications Technology Minister Abdul Moyeen Khan, State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharref Hossain Shahjahan and State Minister for Education ANM Ehsanul Haque Milon.

Sources said the news of including ministers for Ekushey Padak created controversy, following which the prime minister dropped their names and approved the list.

The cabinet committee at a meeting chaired by Environment Minister ariqul Islam yesterday added the name of Prof Asaduzzaman for the

Last year, Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman and Chie Whip Khandakar Delwar Hossain were awarded the Ekushey Padak for their contributions to the 1952 nguage Movement.

Introduced in 1976, the Ekushey Padak is awarded for outstanding contributions to the Language Movement of 1952, and in the fields of education, literature, journalism, and

Bangladesh meet FROM PAGE 1

newly approved venue at the heart of the northern district.

Bangladesh have announced a 12-member squad for the first match yesterday with Alok Kapali making a comeback after more than one year to boost the batting. Opener Javed Omar, pacer Nazmul Hossain and left-arm spinner Manjarul Islam Rana have been ignored. Left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak is expected to be the super-sub.

The good news for the home side was the return of strike paceman Mashrafee Bin Mortuza. Mashrafee was injured at the start of Bangladesh's tour of Sri Lanka and had to return home.

The Tigers have lost all their previous 14 ODIs against the islanders but they are buoyed by the absence of three senior Lankan cricketers, Marvan Atapattu, Chaminda Vaas and Muttiah Muralitharan.

"We are confident to make something different on our home soil. We will try our best to make an impression in the first game. Sri Lanka may miss some senior players but they are still very strong opponents. One can't call them a second-string side," said Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar on the eve of the match.

"We are confident to win all matches here but we will not take Bandladesh lightly," said skipper Mahela Jayawardene, chosen to lead the side after their board decided to rest regular captain Marvan Atapattu.

Khaleda

in various fields and economic progress achieved during the alliance rule and urged the people to maintain the current trend of development by giving their fresh verdict in favour of the BNP.

Presided over by Tamijuddin upazila unit BNP President Hafizur Rahman, the rally was also addressed, among others, by Water Resources Minister Major (retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed, Post and Telecommunications Minister Aminul Huq and PM's Political

Secretary Harris Chowdhury. Earlier, the prime minister inaugurated a Tk 1 crore 250-line Tamijuddin Digital Telephone Exchange with internet facility.

Salma Khan clarifies

In a clarification to The Daily Star report published on February 9 with the headline "3 new envoys appointed, one gets extension" Salma Khan, a member of UN Cedaw, pointed out she is an elected member of the UN

While Salma Khan was appointed as the ambassador to Indonesia, her membership at Committee on the Elimination of Discriminations Against Women of the United Nations (Cedaw) was not cancelled as reported in The Daily Star report.

In her letter she also adds 'Cedaw committee being an UN reaty Body members are elected by the state Parties (180 UN member countries) from amongst the nominees of the countries

Once one is elected as a memper, they work independently in their personal capacity and do not represent any country in the committee, she said, adding that her current term will expire on December 30, 2006. Our Reply

Our report was based on an establishment ministry circular that said Cedaw's elected member Salma Khan was being appointed as the ambassador to ndonesia on a two-year contract, subject to her discontinuing to hold any other posts.

Urea FROM PAGE 16

duction cost of Tk 6,000 only.

Contacted, BCIC Chairman Major General (retd) Imaam-Uz-Zaman

denied any supply dearth in urea. "We're providing the dealers with urea from six factories in Dhaka. Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and from 21 buffer godowns to Rajshahi, Khulna and Barisal divisions," he

The BCIC chairman however attributed the problems of fertiliser carrying and some localised problems of distribution reasons to some tensions over urea availability in certain pockets of the country.

He refuted any allegation of buffer godowns running short of urea, saying, "We have over 2 lakh tonnes of urea stocked in 21 buffer godowns." Another BCIC official gave statis-

tics showing that six factories are generating 9,000 tonnes of urea everyday, while the government has already procured 2 lakh tonnes from abroad and 2.6 lakh tonnes more from Kafco. "Kafco is still providing us with 2,000 tonnes of daily urea input, while the government would soon float

tender for 1 lakh tonne of urea import. Besides, a decision to import yet another tonne of urea has already been taken," a source said. Official sources suspect a huge amount of urea is being smuggled out

to Myanmar due to the big price gap --Tk 4,800 (subsidised selling price) per tonne in Bangladesh and Tk 18,000 pertonne in Myanmar. But the local administration in

nany districts reported hoarding and black marketing by a section of dishonest dealers. Deputy Commissioner of Faridpur

Mohammed Nasiruddin told The Daily Star over phone last night that police caught several fertiliser dealers in his district last month for black-marketing and they were prosecuted under the Special PowerAct.

"Later we recovered the urea, neant for Faridpur, from Khulna and Bagerhat.
"As we took precautionary mea-

sures well in advance, there is no urea dearth in Faridpur. But we're hearing of some problems in some other districts because of monitoring lapses.'

Cabinet talks

FROM PAGE 1 form the review panel drawing from

that pool to look into the issue But the provision for short-listing a pool of panel members has been dropped from the revised bill. It allows the government to form a review panel with in-service bureaucrats if it wants. And the panel's recommendations will not be mandatory for the government to exe-

The sections related to irregularities and punishments have also been massively changed. In stead of specifying what punishment to be meted out for what crime, the revised bill just says, in case of any irregularity, the persons responsible will be punished as per the rules of the departments or agencies concerned.

In the original draft, there was a provision for forming a permanent advisory committee to assist the government in addressing any public procurement complications. But the entire provision has been expunged from the amended bill.

Four new sections have been added to the bill. One of them, Section 71, vests the government with the authority to intervene in any complication and its decision will be final on that matter.

The cabinet on November 2, 2005 had approved in principle the much talked-about procurement law and assigned a five-member committee headed by LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan to examine the draft and make the necessary changes. The committee after a number of

that, after the law ministry's vetting, is now going to be placed before the In the original bill there were 79 sections in seven chapters, while

sittings came up with the revised bill

the revised one has 73 sections in nine chapters.

Nothing but age

can earn Tk 60 on those days when

Yet, Sakhina could never get a loan from any NGO. The massive microcredit operations of a few thousand NGOs have bypassed her, because she is an extreme poor and a doubtful borrower.

Brac, but I figured I would not be able to repay the loans," says Sakhina. "How can I, when all I can earn a day is Tk 60 and that too not every day?"

Sakhina and thousands like her today make a volley of questions: Is microcredit the most effective tool to fight dire poverty? What else should be in place? Are the ultra-poor the microcredit borrowers elevated to small business-men and -women to generate employment?

that microcredit has missed the ultra-poor by and large. At least 30 percent of the total population falls under the extreme-poor category and microcredit could touch only 12 to 15 percent of them, even after much debates, embarrassments and concerns among the NGOs that the wretched have been left out of the credit bandwagon.

microcredit borrowers, but if overlapping of their memberships of more than one NGOs is considered, the net number will come down to about 1.2 million. A rough estimate says only 10 to 12 percent of them can eventually become small entre-

"We have two tough tasks at hand," says Shafiqul Islam, chief of ASA, one of the top four microcredit organisations. "One is to reach the extreme poor -- those who have no ability to repay loans in weekly or monthly instalments. The other is creating the missing middle -- the small business group graduated from microcredit borrowing."

extreme poor," says Dr Imran Matin, director of research and evaluation division of Brac. "They are basically the floating population, people who are victims of river erosion and so on. They don't have any permanent address and so chances of getting

Char in Kurigram. In his mid 20s, deep in the sockets, his collarbones sharply visible. Today he did not have any food in the morning -- the only meal most working-class villagers have until the sundown -and he does not know how he will manage some food for the night.

"I have not found any job for the last three days," he says. The edge of desperation is clear in the voice. "I

am weak and the landowners don't want to put me to work. Even if they

do, I get paid less.' Like Yusuf, these extreme poor are getting lower wages, and since they don't have access to capital, either from banks or from the NGOs. they are unable to become 'poor

However, experiments are now going on. Brac has started a programme to transfer assets to them. Under the scheme, an ultrapoor is given, say, a cow and the support including feeds and veterinary care to rear it. He is provided with healthcare to plug illnessrelated drain on his income. Once he completes a full cycle of the scheme and turns better off, he is then brought under the mainstream microcredit fold. Experiences show 60 percent participants in this ultrapoor programme have crossed the threshold into microcredit.

Similarly, ASA has opened up special branches in the chars to provide lambs and goats to the ultrapoor who do not need to go by weekly repayment instalments. Rather they return the money once they sell the cattle, may be a year

Grameen too has similar programmes through which it even provides funds to beggars.

But underlying all this, one feeling is clearly prevailing -- that despite such efforts, pockets of extreme poverty may be left out and that some of the money may never come back, because these ultrapoor keep drifting

Ali Hossain of Bhagabatipur in Kuriaram is one such person. Forty years of age and 19 times of losing everything to river erosion have left him shattered today. He is getting ready to be displaced once more as the Brahmaputra's cruel current has already gnawed away a big chunk of "Each time the river takes my

home. I become poorer." Ali savs. "I have been living like a gypsy -never in one place for long. Who would care to give me loans?"

The NGOs have started creating the 'missing middle' too. For example. Brac now provides loans of Tk 30,000 to Tk 200,000 to set up small businesses and ASA gives Tk 100,000 to Tk 150,000 for such

But these efforts are taking a long time to make any real impression on extreme poverty or broadbased equality. And as time passes by, life on these northern chars

Hasina vows

Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi in

The AL chief, who placed the reform proposals in the parliament on February 12, said the people would give a deserved reply to the alliance government if they continued to manipulate the voter list and play with the EC instead of fulfilling the proposed reforms.

The former prime minister said the February 21 has taught the people of Bangladesh how to fulfil their demands

Urging the countrymen to take oath and unite with the February 21 spirit, she asked people to make the country free from militancy, corruption, and the misrule of the coalition government.

Patronising the anti-liberation war forces and militancy, the coalition government has tarnished the image of International Mother Language Day throughout the world, she said.

Hasina said people are facing serious difficulties due to unavailability of fuel, seeds and fertilisers and high price of essentials. Trains services have been cancelled. planes have been grounded, and power plants have been shut down due to corruption and mismanage ment of the coalition government, Hasina said.

Hasina said a "Hawa Bhaban syndicate" is hoarding fertilisers, fuel and seeds and has also hiked up prices of essentials only to become richer. She said the prime minister and her family members have stolen thousands of crores from the people.

The discussion was also addressed by Zillur Rahman, Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Tofail Ahmed,

Tripura FROM PAGE 16

Bangladesh, Tripura had excellent transportation links with the then East Pakistan and through it, with West Bengal. While the straight distance

between Agartala and Kolkata is about 350 km, many large towns in Bangladesh are within 150 km from the towns in Tripura. "The goodwill and intention

expressed in the National Common Minimum Programme for development of road and rail infrastructure in the North East should be harnessed by integrating these broad development activities in the road map for development." Sarkar said. During the recent years, a number of initiatives has been taken at

the Government level as well as by

the business community aimed at

re-establishing the historical links

Tripura had with Bangladesh.

Syed Shamsul Haque, Suranjeet Sengupta, AHSK Sadique, Motia Chowdhury, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Saidur Rahman Khan, Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Mukul Bose, Abdur Rahman, Mahmudur Rahman Manna, Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, Nurul Islam Nahid, Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya and Asaduzzaman Noor.

The AL leaders said secularism was established in the country through the bloodshed of the language movement. The movement has taught the nation not to bow to the fundamentalists. They said Bangabandhu suffered a lot to

Sheikh Hasina will place a wreath at the Central Shaheed Minar at 12:01am on February 21.

Ershad

The former president, who ruled Bangladesh for nine years in the 80s, said had the government taken the press reports seriously it could have stopped the damage and resolve the multifaceted crises which the country is now reeling

under. "When I was the president of the country, I used to read 18 newspapers daily and used to ask the ministers concerned almost immediately to look into the relevant sector that went wrong," claimed Ershad whose party is preparing for a big showdown in the city on March

Awami League for what he said the main opposition's utter failure to proiect and protest the government's dismal performance.

He expressed his fear that grains worth \$1.5 million could be lost in poor harvest if the farmers did not receive diesel, electricity, and fertilisers in time. Claiming his regime saw coun-

Mohiuddin's promotion. He told the police that Shalehi dark and redirect the saved power to the rural consumers who require it for irrigation. Ershad, flanked by some of his 12. They videotaped the process of the

> Mohiuddin told the court that those who are demanding his death penalty before the trial are conspiring against He also alleged that the police forced him to be present at the scene

CEC FROM PAGE 1

left the EC compound without responding to journalists' queries about the progress of the task and if the EC extended the time limit for it.

Newly appointed election commissioners SM Zakaria and Mahfuzur Rahman also refused to talk to the press. Acting Secretary to the EC Secretariat Mohammad Zakoria who attended the review meeting forced journalists to leave the office room.

Meeting sources said the CEC expressed his dissatisfaction over the progress of the task.

Élection Commissioner Mohammad Ali termed the task for preparing a fresh voter list, ignoring the HC directives, illegal. "I will not include my name as a voter in the fresh list as it is illegal," he told reporters while leaving his office vesterday.

Meanwhile, the EC's appeal against the HC directives for revising the existing electoral roll still remains unresolved. The Supreme Court Appellate

Division yesterday adjourned the hearing of the EC appeal until February 23 as Appellate Division judge Justice MM Ruhul Amin was The work of preparing a fresh voter list undertaken by the unilateral decision of the CEC began on

January 1. The HC on January 4

disposing of two writ petitions asked

the EC to revise the existing voter

However, the FC Secretariat continued its task ignoring the court orders and asked the commission to

call a meeting immediately. The CEC convened a meeting on January 19 only after being sure of majority in the EC with the appointment of two new election commissioners, SM Zakaria and Mahfuzur Rahman. The meeting decided to appeal against the HC directives amid opposition by election commissioners Munsef Ali and

The EC on January 31 extended the time limit of its ongoing task for preparing the fresh voter list until February 20. On February 13, the time limit was extended again until March 12 and the EC asked the field level manpower to complete the task for preparing the draft voter list Meanwhile, district election

officers said the field level task has apparently come to a halt as the EC has not yet clarified its position on the remuneration of the field level manpower working since January 1. The progress of the task is very slow in Dhaka district, where the

district election office sources said they found inconsistency in the increase of voters. The number of new voters increased by 2 percent under Ramna and Kotowali thanas while the Tejgaon thana is yet to witness any increase.

Mohiuddin

FROM PAGE 16 him before the court after a six-day

"I am innocent and victim of a conspiracy", Mohiuddin, who looked relaxed, told journalists as he was being escorted out of the court.

But the police recorded him as

saying before bringing him to the

court. "I studied well the books of

law for two years. I told you (police) everything, but I will never confess before any court. "Our investigation so far shows that the man standing in the dock (Mohiuddin) was the mastermind of the killing", Court Inspector Mahbubul

the bail prayer. Mohiuddin persuaded the alleged killers -- Taher's housekeeper Zahangir, his brother Abdus Salam and their relative Nazmul two months before the murder alluring them with money, computers and offers of jobs,

Kuddus Siddiki told the court opposing

Siddiki said. He also said, apart from confessional statements of the three alleged killers who are already in police custody, the police obtained a number of other evidences connecting Mohiuddin with the murder.

The killers are poor and ambitious a disposition that gave them reasons to believe in the promises of jobs by an influential teacher like Mohiuddin and Shibir leader Shalehi, he said.

Advocate Saiful Alam Shelly, the defence counsel, said the murder charge against Mohiuddin is imagibecause Mohiuddin had no scope for grievance against Taher as the RU vice-chancellor had already

processed his promotion. He also said Mohiuddin's alleged presence at the scene of the murder is

not believable if he hired the killers. Prof S Taher Ahmed was found murdered in a sewer on the backvard of his residence on the RU campus on February 3. The police arrested Mohiuddin on Feb 7 in connection with

MOHIUDDIN'S STATEMENT

The police recorded Mohiuddin as saying that he had borrowed the revolver used in Taher's murder from Shalehi and gave it back to him after the murder. Zahangir told the police earlier that

he took the revolver from Mohiuddin

and hit Taher on the head from the

back with its butt.

Mohiuddin said Shalehi took away the missing file that Taher had brought from Dhaka. The file contained documents that argued against

helped him in the murder. The police, however, recovered Taher's missing ATM cards and business cards from the bank of the Padma River at Shahapur following Mohiuddin's confession on February

of the recovery of the missing docu-

Gujarat poultry farmer

FROM PAGE 1 Nandurbar district in Maharashtra where the dreaded bird flu came to be noticed. It was being ascertained whether they were suffering from the

avian flu, officials said. Meanwhile, wearing protective gloves and masks, health officials in Maharashtra began culling over eight lakh chickens and vaccinating another two lakh to stop the spread of the

disease. Of the 12 to13 lakh birds in Nandurbar district, nearly 2.5 lakh had been culled since Saturday night, official sources said.

Seeking to allay fears over reports

on bird flu at Navapur in Maharashtra. Indian Health Minister Anbumani Ramadoss said adequate measures had been taken to check spreading of the disease. "People need not worry about bird

flu. Adequate preventive measures have been taken to protect people as well as fowls," he told reporters. The government also rushed stockpiles of Tamiflu, the most potent drug against bird flu, to the Navapur

where the dreaded disease was

officially confirmed for the first time to have broken out among chickens. "The Central government labora-tory in Bhopal of Madhya Pradesh has confirmed the presence of bird flu there," said Uttam Khobragade, principal secretary of Animal Husbandry and Dairy Development

The confirmation by the Bhopal lab came after a committee of experts was formed to examine the samples and compare those received from Bangkok, This was for the first time the lab found strain of the disease since it started testing samples three years

tine of three km area around Navapur, Khobragade said. Three children and a woman of Navapur, with suspected symptoms of the avian influenza, are under observation. Their samples had been sent to

National Institute of Virology in Pune

and it will take two more days for a

confirmation if they are suffering from

The government ordered quaran-

the disease, Indian Health Secretary P K Hota told reporters here. Some more people have been guarantined as a precautionary measure and samples of twelve more people will reach the National Institute

Earlier reports held a seasonal

disease responsible for the death of

around 40,000 chickens in and around

of Virology soon, Hota said

Navapur during the last week

A five-member team of specialists from National Institute of Communicable Diseases and veterinary doctors were already in the affected area.

Maharashtra has stopped all kind of poultry trades in Nandurbar district. Indian Federal Cabinet Secretary

the disease in India and said 60 teams of specialists and a rapid response of epidemiologists were already in the disease-hit place While no national alert has been issued, authorities in Maharashtra and

BK Chaturvedi confirmed the arrival of

neighbouring Gujarat and Karnataka states have been asked to remain on India is estimated to have 75 million doses of Tamiflu, the best-known drug manufactured by Swiss pharmaceutical company Roche, to combat the avian flu. Hyderabad-based Indian

company Hetero Drugs has been given the licence for bulk manufacturng of the drug. "We have supplied five lakh doses to the government last week and they have ordered another two lakh capsules." Hetero director Srinivas Reddy

doses are under production. The breaking out of the disease is likely to hit the Rs 30 thousand crore poultry industry of India.

said adding that one million additional

BB clarifies

FROM PAGE 16 getting fresh credit from other banks e clarification said.

As per the new policy the defaulting borrower who has availed interest waiver must settle at least 15% of the compromise amount (excluding the down payment on rescheduling as per present guideline) to get any further credit facility from any bank, it said. While the defaulting borrowers

could easily avail themselves of loans

from other banks, the new policy has

made it mandatory that the information

on the concerned credit account

should be reported to the CIB in case of interest and credit waiver, the central bank clarification added. Taking opportunity of the previous policy, defaulters showed reluctance

to pay the earlier loan to the lending

But the new policy has made provision for reflecting the loan defaulters' performances in the report of the Credit Information Bureau, which will help to decide on giving further loan,

Villagers feel helpless

at night. "We don't disturb them. We're not with any party. We went there to help the land office take possession of the land," he claimed.

He said. "We were directed by

the district administration and did our duty in presence of a number of government officials." The Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) of Savar was present at the spot during the take-over. "I was

present there and as far as I know it is a khas land." he said. Asked if he can hand over a land when cases are under trial over it. he said he did not know anything about the cases.

Savar Assistant Commissioner (Land) Jahirul Islam said Mirza obtained the lease of the government land in 2005. "So, we went there to take possession of the land and hand it over to the leasee." he said. "There was no incident of land grabbing, as we actually handed

over the land to its real owner." When asked then how had the villagers been occupying the land and paying taxes for more than a hundred years, he said that was

llegal and they did it mistakenly However, Jahirul said, "Now, if

children of about 500 families had been staying in their houses fenced off by barbed wire during Thursday's

back to them," we will do that.

the court orders to give the land

More than 1,000 women and

Earlier, in October 2005, the

police and Mirza's men tried to take possession of the land but failed in the face of villagers' resistance. Aformer deputy commissioner of Dhaka district told The daily Sta that leasing out the land in such a way was not fair. "Even if the land was khas, the villagers should have

received priority in getting the

ease," he said, requesting anonym-

Meanwhile, the home ministry in a rejoinder has denied any involvement of the state minister of home in the lease of taking possession of the land. It said the media reports that implied using the influence of State Minister Lutfozzaman Babar in obtaining police assistance in the occupation were completely untrue, wily and baseless.

Israel slaps sanctions

Palestinian government would be

"It is clear that in light of the

regarded as beyond the pale.

Hamas majority in the PLC (parliament) and the instructions to form a new government that were given to the head of Hamas, the PA is, in practice, becoming a terrorist authority. The state of Israel will not agree to this," said Olmert at the start of the meeting. He then received overwhelming

backing for a series of sanctions

including a ban on Palestinian work-

ers crossing into Israel for work as well as a freeze on the payment of customs duties, worth around 50 million dollars a month, which Israel collects on behalf of the Palestinian Authority. "As we stated immediately after the PA elections, upon the conclusion of the transitional government, Israel

funds to the PA," he said. Abbas's spokesman criticised Olmert's team for implementing a change of policy even before a new Palestinian government had been "This an over-hasty decision and

will immediately cease the transfer of

they should at least wait until a Palestinian cabinet has been declared," Nabil Abu Rudeina told The spokesman said that Abbas was due to travel to Hamas's Gaza

Strip stronghold from his base in the West Bank city of Ramallah for talks on forming a new government. Leaders of Hamas, landslide winners of a January 25 election, are unable to travel to the West Bank as Israel refuses to grant them permits. "He will ask Hamas to produce a

name for the post of prime minister,"

Abu Rudeina said. "After he is given

the name, he will then write to ask the

nominee to form a government and get approval for his line-up from parliament." Hamas meanwhile confirmed as widely predicted that Ismail Haniya. who topped its list of candidates, was

its choice to form the new administra-

"The leadership of the movement, inside and outside Palestine, agreed to name Ismail Haniya as our first prime minister," Hamas deputy Salah al-Bardawil told AFP.

"The movement will inform presi-

dent Abbas of the choice and to tell

him to declare the new government."

Hamas, which refuses to recognise Israel's right to exist and has carried out dozens of suicide attacks in the past five years, has so

far rebuffed calls by Abbas to recognise past agreements signed with Israel Apart from Israel, the United States and European Union have also threatened to slash funding for

the Palestinian Authority unless Hamas commits itself to nonviolence, drops its calls for Israel's destruction and respects international agreements such as a troubled peace plan known as the roadmap.

Bird flu

among humans.

Netherlands. Kafco paid \$50.3 million to the for a thousand cubic feet of gas. It made a net profit worth \$63.6

Kafco also paid \$10 million

Power

during the peak hours last evening.

shedding," said a Desa official. The power plants that remain

the authorities to go for load-The situation got even worse when one unit of 56-MW Shikalbaha

MW from 746MW. Having some 100 MW withdrawn

situation will improve.

FROM PAGE 16 Initiative for Youth in Asia (RHIYA) and its impact in the areas, UNFPA officials said.

The delegation will call on

Monjur Murshid said, "It needs at least 70 degree Celsius temperature to kill the influenza virus. If the eggs and poultry meat are properly cooked, there will not be any problem for human body." There are some 150,000 poultry

"Bird flu outbreak in India is a Poultry Owners Association.

jobs are at hand.

"I wanted to take loans from

getting the benefits? And a more burning question is: How well are Figures are there that support

There are now about 1.6 million

"It is difficult for us to target the

back loans from them is slim." But that makes them doubly vulnerable, like Yusuf Ali of Nazirer Yusuf looks fragile. His eyes are set

establish our mother tongue.

FROM PAGE 16 ing at a city hotel yesterday.

Ershad was equally critical of

try's power generation capacity rise from only 700MW in 1982 to 2300MW in 1990. Ershad asked the government to go for power rationing at city's shopping arcades after

key party colleagues, was critical of recovery shifting the cricket venue from Bangabandhu National Stadium to Mirpur Stadium. Ershad was also taken aback by the government's decision to arrange Bangladesh-Sri Lanka One-Day Internationals (ODIs) matches in Bogra instead of