Fertiliser, diesel

FROM PAGE 1 Tala Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Mostafizur Rahman for about an hour on the road. Demanding fertilisers, they assaulted the DC as the two

attempted to remove the barricade. Besides, at least 20 farmers staged fast-until-death in front of the Patkelghata Police Station, demanding immediate supply of fertilisers.

Police said the farmers came to Patkelghata Bazar in the morning to buy fertilisers, but as urea was scarce and pricey, the angry farmers staged sit-in on the highway

Meanwhile, over 2,000 farmers put up barricade on the Satkhira-Kaligani Road in Satkhira Sadar upazila from 7:00am to 11:00am yesterday, demanding fertilisers.

The angry farmers chanted slogans against Jamaat lawmaker Maulana Abdul Khaleque for not taking any measure to solve the fertiliser crisis

Sadar UNO SM Ashrafuzzaman and the police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control assuring the farmers of fertiliser supply within 2:00pm today.

In Jessore, agitating farmers demanding fertiliser brought out processions and hurled shoes at the office of the Keshabpur UNO yesterday morning. They also laid siege to the Upazila Krishi Office, reports our correspondent in Jessore.

DC Mohammad Abdul Wazed and Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Omai Farook rushed to Keshabpur at noon and distributed 245 bags urea Hundreds of farmers, however, had to return empty-handed.

Our Rangpur correspondent reports: Hundreds of farmers laid siege to the offices of the DC and the Deputy Director of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), protesting adulteration and crises of agricultural inputs including diesel, fertiliser, seeds and power in the

DC Nazrul Islam Khan and DAE Deputy Director Ainul Haque, however. had left their offices sensing the farmers' programme.

The angry farmers damaged a vehicle of an agro-input marketing company in front of the Zila Parshad Community Centre Market.

The farmers under Rangpur Krishi Unnayan Forum, Rangpur Potato Farmers Council and Rangpur Farmers Council brought out a procession in the morning and paraded the main roads of the town.

In Cox's Bazar also, different political parties and farmers' organisations took to the streets and besieged the Ukhiya UNO office, demanding fertiliser and diesel, reports our correspondent in the

The Awami League (AL) and the Communist Party of Bangladesh brought out processions, held rallies and laid siege to the UNO office. The AL activists scuffled with the

police as the law enforcers obstructed their programme. The manager of Fayez Filling

Station in the town said he got enough diesel for sale although the diesel crisis and short supply of urea have deepened the farmers' woes.

Our Gaibandha correspondent reports: Fuel stock of Balashi floating depot was exhausted within three days of receiving nearly 5 lakh litre diesel. There is widespread allegation that six distributors in the remote shoal areas hoarded 51,200 litre diesel after receiving fuel from the

Sources said oil barge MV Tapash arrived at the Balashi floating depot with 495,000 litre diesel on February 18. The depot distributed 400.000

litre diesel among 24 dealers and distributors the same day.

Locals alleged that around six

distributors of the shoal areas hoarded more than 50,000 litre fuel for additional profit. They also alleged that although these distributors had papers for specific sale $centres, they \, did \, not \, follow \, it.$

These distributors either sold the total stock on the black market or to people at high price, sources said.

Aminul Huq, local union parishad

nember and owner of Bhai Bhai Enterprise that received 8,800 litre diesel from the depot, however denied the allegations of selling fuel at Tk 36 per litre. "We are selling diesel at Tk 33 per litre and are compelled to do so to compensate for the high cost of transportation and

Eighteen more oil dealers in the remote shoal areas have meanwhile received 398,000 litre diesel at the instruction of the monitoring cell concerned, said Motiur Rahman, incharge of Balashi floating depot.

US eager to help

FROM PAGE 16 in Bangladesh and thinking of how assist it in this regard.

Briefing newsmen about the meeting with Crowley that lasted for about an hour Abdul Jalil said they informed the US congressmar about 14-party's proposal for reforms in the caretaker government system and the Election Commission that had been placed at the Jatiya Sangsad.

"Our leader said without necessary reforms in the caretaker government system and the Election Commission it is not possible to hold a free and fair election," Jalil told the iournalists.

Hasina had provided Crowlev with an elaborate picture of the current political and social situation in the country including downslide of law and order, human rights violations with impunity, torture on opposition activists, corruption, and terrorism.

'We told him that our aim in placing the proposals for electoral reforms is to hold a fair election to ensure peoples right to vote and to institutionalise democracy in the country," Abdul Jalil MP said.

He said the US congressman, who is on a three-day visit to Bangladesh, expressed concerns over rising religious militancy in the country, which is destroying the values of the Liberation War.

'We said corruption is another serious issue that is tarnishing the image and hindering the development process of the country. A large portion of resources of the country are in the hands of only a few people," Jalil informed the journalists.

Jalil claimed that Crowley appreciated the AL for establishing good vernance during its regime.

Hasina during her meeting with Crowley also sought help from him achieving duty-free access for Bangladeshi garment products to the US market. "He said he would think how to help Bangladesh to get a duty-free access." Jalil said.

AL Presidium Member Suranjit Sen Gupta MP, Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, former diplomat Faruk Chowdhury and US Charge Chammas were also present at the meeting.

Tk 94cr money suit filed against Ingilab

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Enterprise

The local office of Sonali Bank in Motiiheel commercial area vesterday filed three money suits against three industries of Ingilab Enterprize and Publications Ltd for realisation of Tk 94 crore default loans

The suits were filed with the First Artharin Adalat, Dhaka making defendants AMM Bahauddin executive director of M/S kaderia Publications and Products Ltd. Hosne Ara Begum, chairman of M/S Arshia Apparels Ltd and eight others of the three industries.

Following the hearing, Judge Mohammad Rafiqul Islam issued summons upon the defendants to appear before it on March 6.

In the plaints of the three suits, the plaintiffs of the bank mentioned that the industries took Tk 94 crore as loan from the local office of the bank in Motiiheel commercial area mortgaging their properties against the amount of money. The industries took the loan from 1990 to 1998.

As the industries failed even though the bank repeatedly insisted that they pay the money, the bank filed the suits for realisation of the money by selling their mortgaged properties, the plaintiffs added.

Barrister Abdullah Al Mamun and advocate Golam Sarwar Moni moved

Over 35 thousand Bangladeshis missing in India

Lok Sabha told

UNB. New Delhi

Indian Minister of State for Home Sriprakash Jaiswal on Tuesday nformed the Lower House (Lok Sabha) of Parliament that 35.718 Bangladeshi nationals were missing in India following the expiry of their

He said some 62,998 foreign nationals including Bangladeshis were absconding.

'Such foreigners were found to be overstaying after expiry of their visas as on December 31,2004," the minister added He said the state government has

been delegated powers to detect and deport foreign nationals staying in India illegally. Besides instructions were also issued to the state government authorities to launch special drive to detect and deport foreigners staying illegally.

Jaiswal also informed the House

12,592 Afghans and 8,287 Pakistanis were also absconding in the country. Nationals from Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan form the bulk of foreigners overstaying in the country.

There are also nationals from

over 100 countries, who after expiry of visas continued to stay in the country illegally. In fact, 716 American and 39 British citizens are also reported to be absconding.

ligers

composure with Bangladesh comfortably placed at 154 for three by the end of the 37th over. Both Bashar and Ashraful were caught at deep mid-on in the space of four deliveries and Bangladesh suddenly slumped to 155-5.

But little Aftab and Alok Kapali brought back cheers in a full house crowd with an absorbing stand of 51 runs for the sixth wicket to effectively seal the match. The game looked evenly poised when Bangladesh needed 46 runs off 46 balls. But after Aftab hit a six over long on and a four in the 45th over bowled by Dilhara Fernando that produced 16 runs, victory was just a matter of time.

Aftab's 22-ball cameo contained two fours and a six. The 21-year-old Aftab who was later adjudged manof-the-match, levelled the score hitting the last ball of the 46th over

But the Chittagong right-hander, who hit the winning runs against Australia in June last year, was standing at the non-striker's end when wicketkeeper Khaled Mashud glided the ball to third man for the winning run.

Bangladesh had earlier bowled Sri Lanka out for 212 in exactly 49 overs after a delayed start due to fog forced the match to be reduced by one over.

Opener Sanath Jayasuriya struck a superb 96 but failed to get support from other batsmen.

But it was the Bangladesh bowlers who deserve kudos for containing the free-scoring Sri Lankans after Bashar won a good toss and decided to field on a damp wicket.

Left-arm paceman Sved Rasel struck the first two blows before and Mohammad Rafique Kapali ripped through the middle-order with a couple of scalps each. Premier Bangladesh paceman Mashrafee-Bin-Mortuza also bowled his heart out, but he was unlucky to get a wicket.

The match also had its share of controversy when Bangladesh umpire Mahabubur Rahman declared Sri Lanka opener Jehan Mubarak caught behind by Mashud off Rasel in his second over. TV replays showed that Mashud took the ball off the bounce and Jayasuriya standing at the other end failed to persuade Mahbub to call for a verdict of the third umpire.

Jayasuriya made a slow start scoring just eight runs off the first 26 deliveries but reached his 60th halfcentury off 61 deliveries. He hit eight fours and a six.

Sri Lanka, who were at one stage reeling on 168-7, could only cross the 200-mark thanks to a productive last over of Nazmul that yielded 19 runs.

Divided lessons, falling quality | Crowley hopes

FROM PAGE 1 fish" several times, then she gives

"I can't read," she admits quietly and fumbles with the corner of her torn yellow frock. On this remote char, her parents could not afford her any warm clothes even in the December chill. Her hairs have not received any care for god knows how many years.

A class-VI student is tried next. Touting a wristwatch with a silvery strap, Mafidul comes from a different school -- Narayanpur High School -- a few villages away. He looks equally baffled by the writings on the board but could read the 'am' in the sentence "I am a student". Then he gives up, too. These children have no faults of

their own. They have a school housed in a two-storey building. It in fact is the loudest thing to exist on the Char, a yellow structure built by the government. Its iron windows and doors look solid. The playground is quite big. Tables and benches are there, though they remain overturned most of the time. Defying these facilities, what stands in stark contrast is that the students hardly see their teachers.

"He came here today after a month," Lokman Ali, an elderly man sporting white beards, tries to recall. "But he has gone to see some of his friends." It was 11 in the morning, an unlikely hour for a teacher to take a personal break. But that is what it is in the remote chars. The villagers counted with their

poor arithmetic and came to the conclusion that the school was open for two months last year. What can they do if the teacher does not But hardly can anyone blame the teacher. He lives at least 15 kilometres off at a place called

Kathalbari. If anyone thinks he would come every day from there, crossing the Brahmaputra spending a few hundred takas. he must be bereft of his senses. But char or no char, it makes little difference for many. A few hundred miles from the char, at Purba

Tengripara Girls High School in

Ishwardi, VII, VIII and IX grade

students are tried about their educa-

Sumaiya Sultana Mini, a seventh grader, cannot translate "I get up early in the morning" from Bangla. Her classmate Ariina Khatun cannot say what is photosynthesis. A ninth grader, Tuli Khatun, does not know what happened in 1757 in the his-

At Madhyakumorpur Primary Girls School in Kurigram, Sheuli, a class-VI student, does not know the words -- rice, fish, goat or chicken.

The same picture emerged from at least six schools spreading from Ishwardi to Kurigram. The pictures all tell one single story -- the sharp quality divide in education not only exists between the cities and semirural and rural areas but also between the rich and the poor in

The divide is sharper in the poorest areas," says Rasheda K Chowdhury, director of the Campaign for Popular Education, Bangladesh (Campe). "The schools in the poor rural areas don't have adequate teaching staffs; even if they have teachers, they are often absent or hire out their jobs to somebody else. The situation is leading to a widening of the education gap between the rich and the poor."

"We spend 25 to 30 dollars a year for each primary student. But 90 percent of the amount goes to pay the teachers' salary," Rasheda points out. "And less than 10 percent is spent on teachers' training.

The books and the teaching methods are uninteresting, making education a tedious task for the children. The NGO-run schools are better in these respects. But they cover only 8 percent of the children Seventy percent are left to government schools and the rest to private

"Of the 70 percent children enrolled in the government schools, only 10 percent -- those who attend the cadet colleges -- get better education," says Rasheda. "This means the mainstream of the population is being badly educated and they won't be at the helm of the public affairs at the later stage. If education remains confined to the elite, this will have negative impacts on the country's development."

These observations clash with the other side of the education scenario. For example, more and more children are going to schools today -- 80 percent of those between six and eight years take admission in schools. Fewer children are dropping out of schools and more are completing the primary education cycle. Threefourths of those who attend schools actually complete their education. The gender parity in education has even a rosier picture. Boys and girls are going to schools in equal num-Nice statistics, generating a nice

sense of complacency. But a little afield, and the downslide begins. Only 2 percent of the children who complete primary education can muster all the government-set capabilities. Two-thirds of the children completing primary education remain basically illiterate or semiliterate. Like the children of Bhagabatipur Char, they remain uneducated even after five years of schooling. Even this year, 2 million children will remain out of the primary schooling.

There are too many students

than teachers. There is only one teacher for every 72 students in the government schools and the corresponding figure for private schools is 55 students. If the primary education has to stand on a firm footing. then the numbers of schools, classrooms and teachers have to be doubled. Even then, monitoring of the schools will remain a big problem, as in the present situation each assistant upazila education officer has to inspect 41 schools on average -- a number that goes up to 212 in many places. So, the monitoring officials do not regularly visit all the

But, whether the children at all learn anything or not, whether the teachers come or not, the parents want their children to go to school.

Even in the remotest Bhagabatipur Char, Shefali, Monir, Haider, Laila and Arun were plodding through the vast sandy expanse with a few dirty, torn books

"Yes, I go to school every day," says Monir. "It's fun. We can play there a lot and get biscuits free." "If I am at home," Laila, a

scrawny fourth grader, smiles, "my mother will force me to work. I will have to wash cooking pots. It's better to go to school." "We want our children to be

educated," Shakoor, 49, a day labourer in Kakmari village of Pabna, sounds thoughtful. "If they can read and write, they can't be cheated." Once, a Tk 5,000 loan was thrust down on Shakoor by a moneylender, although he claims to have taken only Tk 1,000. But the moneylender had all documents ready to prove that Shakoor had taken Tk 5,000 But, that hope for a better edu-

cated generation looks doubtful as children like Laila, Monir and Haider keep going to schools that teach little and care even less. They only feed the statistics

book, inflating the literacy figures, belying the truth (This is the fifth of the seven-part

Khaleda

appreciated the steps taken by the government for the security of the Ahmadiyya community. He said he is satisfied with the condition of the country's Christian community and

arrived here on Tuesday on a threeday visit, informed the prime minister that he met the Ahmadiyya leaders and also talked to the Archbishop the chief of the Christian community and came to know about their well-

government measures in checking the recent snate of bomb terrorism in the country. The forthcoming midterm elec-

tions in the USA and the general elections in Bangladesh to be held in January 2007 came up for discussion during the meeting

of Asian University for Women in Chittagong was also discussed. US Charge d'Affaires Judith A

Chammas was present during the eeting.
BDNEWS adds: Visiting US

Congressman Joseph Crowley called on Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan yesterday and discussed various issues including human rights scenario in Bangladesh.

including Ahmadiyya and minority issues," Morshed Khan told the iournalists The foreign minister said the

human rights situation of the country has improved a lot since Crowley's last visit in September 2005.

Pirates kill cop

fire, triggering a gunfight with the police," a witness said. Constable Dulal died on the spot when the pirates shot at him

seriously.

locals rushed to the scene and retrieved the body of Dulal and rescued the injured. However, the pirates sped away by their speedboat by the time the rescuers reached the spot. The injured Sub-inspector (SI)

I wo to die

father of Ameer Hossain, demanding Tk four lakh as toll. Ali gave in to the demand and provided Tk 3.6 lakh to

gans attacked Ali's home for rest of the money on January 31, 2001. They dragged Ameer out of his room and

Abdur Rashid, Fajlur Rahman defended the accused

details of the opposition's agenda. But he knows about the voter enrolment issue that needs to be settled so that all eligible voters can exercise their franchise on the election day, he said, adding all political parties have the responsibility to ensure that.

When asked if he feels that human rights of the religious minorities are being violated in Bangladesh, the congressman said some minority groups expressed their concerns but also appreciated "some positive steps" of the prime minister to protect their houses, places of worship and right to worship.

He lauded Bangladesh as a

moderate Islamic democracy. The archbishop he met on Tuesday told him, "I think some positive steps have taken place," he reported to the conference

access of Bangladeshi goods to the USA, said it is a bit difficult now to get the bill passed with bipartisan support, as they are heading for the midterm elections in November. The bill is now pending in the US Senate. However, he hoped the bill would

and children that helped the country move up to category-2, and also to appreciate the steps to curb child

ranked as the most corrupt nation by Transparency International for five Crowley said the August 17

countrywide orchestrated bomb blasts sent a "wake-up call" not only to the people of Bangladesh but also to the world about how well coordioutfits like the JMB.

ity of Bangladeshi security personnel through special training programmes. When asked about the state of

tolerance in the USA, as he preached about it, he said, "America is not perfect on all counts," but it is better than others, adding they also always try to make things "more perfect"

Crowley said he had opposed the US decision after the 9/11 to put 24 Arabian and Muslim countries includ-

their citizens to go through a special process of registration to travel to the US. He also opposed the US move to deport 40.000 people staving in the states without valid documents, he told the press.

Describing the Bangladesh-US relations as very good and improving, the congressmen said on his return to Washington he would tell the US secretary of state and his friends to appreciate Bangladesh's efforts to fight against terrorism. He also promised to try to maintain the US aid low to Bangladesh.

American Center Director Jonathan Cebra and Chief Information Officer AA Ahmed Ali were present at the conference.

Judiciary

FROM PAGE 1

Division was absent due to illness. The Appellate Division bench chaired by Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassir Husain fixed March 1 for

The Supreme Court on February 1 rejected the government's prayer for the 22nd time for separation of judiciary and asked barrister M Amir-Ul Islam to file an updated petition regarding contempt in violating the Supreme Court's 12-

point directive'. In his contempt petition filed on April 13, 2004, barrister Amir accused three secretaries for violating the Supreme Court's 12-point directive in framing rules for forming Judicial Service Commission. While updating his petition yesterday, he also brought charge against six other bureaucrats.

The nine officials are prime minister's Principal Secretary Dr Kamal Uddin Siddiqui, Law Secretary Alauddin Sardar, former law secretary Asaduzzaman, Establishment Secretary Mahbubur Rahman, Cabinet Secretary ASM Abdul Halim, Home Secretary and former establishment secretary Safar Raj Hossain, former establishment secretary Anwarul Bar Chowdhury, Finance Secretary Zakir Ahmed Khan and former finance secretary Siddiqur Rahman.

Attorney General AJ Mohammad Ali yesterday submitted government proceedings on the Supreme Court's 12-point directives.

The accused government officials against whom the Supreme Court issued contempt rule for distorting the 12-point directive appeared in person before the court and they will have to appear in person before the Appellate Division on March 1

The Supreme Court on

India awaits flu tests

Europe, into Africa and now India. where hundreds of millions of people live in rural areas side-by-side Experts fear it is just a matter of

time before the virus mutates and spreads easily among people, riggering a pandemic. Indian health workers some wringing the necks of chickens, others using poison, are carrying

out a mass cull of birds to try to stamp out the country's first outbreak of the virus. The dozen quarantined people have been placed in an isolation ward at a hospital in Navapur town

in the western state of Maharashtra, where H5N1 was found in poultry on Saturday. Those quarantined either had flu-like symptoms or were kept there as a precautionary measure. Blood samples from dozens of other

people were also being tested, officials said. "The initial results are expected today (Wednesday) evening," Vijay Satbir Singh, Maharashtra's top health official, told Reuters. "We are

keeping our fingers crossed.' Adding to fears, there were reports of more poultry dying beyond Maharashtra, where the sudden deaths of 50,000 birds heralded the initial outbreak. Malaysian Health Minister Chua

Soi Lek told reporters the seven residents lived within 300 metres of the affected area on the edge of the capital. Kuala Lumpur, where 40 infected chickens died last week in the country's first outbreak in more than a year.

"Those warded are the ones exposed to the chickens." he said. using a common term for admission to hospital.

In Brussels, FU animal health experts considered requests from France and the Netherlands. Europe's biggest poultry producers, to be allowed to vaccinate millions of birds against avian influenza. Talks on the request are continuing.

Bird flu has killed more than 90 people since 2003. Despite its rapid march around the globe, it remains hard for people to catch. But if it mutates, a pandemic could bring economic chaos and overwhelm health services. Migratory birds are thought to be

at least one way the disease is being carried and more than 30 countries have reported cases since 2003. seven of them recording human infections.

In Indonesia, where the virus is endemic in poultry, a Health Ministry official said a 27-year-old woman who lived in the capital had died of bird flu, according to local hospital tests. If confirmed by the World Health Organization (WHO), the woman would be the 20th Indonesian

tests showed the virus in three dead swans found last week, while Croatia also confirmed H5N1 had

search for birds stricken with avian flu to the heart of its capital as speculation grew that smuggled fighting cocks could have brought the virus into the country.
Indian health workers wearing

But a report in the Times of India

birds, buried alive in shallow pits were re-emerging. State health director T.P. Doke denied knowledge of the chickens being buried alive. In Europe, officials urged people to carry on eating poultry meat after a string of outbreaks in birds. The WHO

says thoroughly cooked poultry meat

Communalism

FROM PAGE 16

time, poor quality of teachers' training, and poor physical facilities are the main causes for poor perfor-

technical and vocational education to reduce rising pressure on the universities.

Presiding over by WFTU/FISE Vice President Prof Dr M Akhtaruzzaman, the seminar was also addressed by its General Secretary Prof Mrinmoy Bhattacharyya, and Biju Longhinos. lecturer of University College,

Govt to purchase

aircraft were old and hence there had been a misuse of public funds an advance payment had been made in violation of the terms of the agreement and the purchase pro-

issued a rule nisi on the government and asked it to explain why the purchase agreement should not be declared illegal. Later, it decided that the parliamentary committee should not be prevented from examining the issue and the rule was vacated.

After coming to power, the present government filed corruption cases against the then prime minister, Sheikh Hasina and others, regarding

said. No casualties were reported. An aerial photograph released by the US military showed the 20meter (33-foot) wide dome reduced to a shell of brown masonry and twisted iron, with nearby buildings

guards and set the charges. National Security Adviser Mowaffaq al-Rubaie, a Shia, who

blamed the attack on al Qaeda, told

state television 10 suspects had

been arrested. "They will fail to draw

the Iraqi people into civil war as they have failed in the past," he said. As gunmen attacked Sunni mosques, Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari. a Shia, declared three days of mourning and called for Muslim unity. He said the interim government had sent officials to Samarra,

Thousands of people marched in Shia towns across the country and Samarra attack

100 km north of Baghdad.

SHIA PROTESTS

Mogtada al-Sadr, were out in force in Shia strongholds like Sadr City in Baghdad and the southern city of Samawa. In nearby Diwaniya, a local government official said a Mehdi

militiaman was killed in clashes with

Sunni residents. Some shopkeep-

ers closed their stores for the mourning period.
US officials, most recently ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad on Monday, are pressing Jaafari to form a cabinet with support across the nation to avert the threat of a civil war that could thwart Washington's efforts to withdraw its 130,000 troops Jaafari angrily dismissed the envov's intervention. Sunni rebels are strong in

Samarra and there have been attacks recently on Shia pilgrims visiting the shrine to the revered 9thcentury Imam Ali al-Hadi and his son, Imam Hassan al-Askari. Shia Web sites said relics of the buried imams, including a helmet and shield, were damaged in the exploIn the holy city of Najaf, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, revered by lions of Shias and a key force for restraint in the face of Sunni insurgent attacks. made a rare call for protests and declared seven days of mourning.

He insisted in a statement,

however, that there must be no violence and in particular no reprisals against Sunni mosques. Outside his office, where Sistani was meeting his most senior colleagues, 2,000 demonstrators

chanted: "Rise up Shias! Shias take revenge! Rise up Shias!" "For the Shias ... this is a major assault comparable to an attack on Mecca for all Muslims," said Hazim al-Naimi, a political science professor at Baghdad's Mustansiriya

University.
"We will definitely see more sectarianism after this attack ... I could push the country closer to civil Smaller protests erupted elsewhere and shopkeepers in some

Shia areas closed their stores for the mourning period. Sectarian attacks by the likes of al Qaeda, led by Jordanian Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, on Shia gatherinas includina suicide bombinas that killed 170 people at a Shia festival in 2004 have failed to spark all-out reprisals, although Sunnis accuse the Shia-led government of condoning police

death squads. The symbolic attack on the shrine appeared to spark greater violent outrage than the many attacks on Shia worshippers. Ordinary Shias were dismayed

by the violence: "Whoever did this are not human beings. They are less than animals," said Wuroud Kathim 29, a computer specialist, in central

FROM PAGE 16 as AL's pro-hartal procession set fire

Tension prevails at Kazipur and Sirajganj town following the ashes. Additional police force has been deployed to avoid any unto-

AL walks out of JS

the walkout and delivering "false" information in parliament.

The AL lawmakers on different points of order strongly criticised the government and demanded discussion in parliament on these issues. saving they have submitted notices for Health and Family Welfare Mi Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain

questioned the validity of the point of order raised by the AL lawmakers. saying all these issues can be discussed during the discussion on the thanks-giving motion. Taking floor, AL lawmaker Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim demanded separate discussions on these issues. "It is

not fair to let the burning issues be discussed in the thanks-giving motion." he said. As the ruling party did not agree with the AL demands, the opposition lawmakers walked out of the House

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar along with the ruling ministers criticised the AL lawmakers for their walkout. He also supported the LGRD minister's remark that the AL has joined the House to cheat people. "[The AL lawmakers] have delivered speeches ignoring the rules of

procedure of the House and staged

valkout," LGRD and Cooperatives

Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuivan said

and returned after 10 minutes.

adding, "We are in doubt if they joined the House to really make parliament effective.' Participating in the debate, Chief Whip Khandakar Delwar Hossain questioned the validity of the AL lawmakers' demand for the discussions on various issues as the business advisory committee unanimously

on any specific issue. suggested that the speaker stop the unscheduled debate and run the House as per the decision of the business advisory committee. The speaker, who was presiding over the sitting that resumed after a

five-day recess, also got involved in

decided that no discussion will be held

the 50-minute long unscheduled debate for his remark about Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MA Referring to AL lawmaker Noor-e-Alam Chowdhury's allegation about plot allocations to the CEC. LGRD minister and two other ruling BNP lawmakers, Sircar commented that Justice Aziz is an honest, sincere and

In the face of the AL lawmakers' protest, the speaker later clarified his remark, saving. "I have neither delivered any ruling nor spoken as the speaker. I just expressed my personal experience as a lawyer." The AL lawmakers were walking out of the House at the time.

Noor-e-Alam claimed that all

allocations were illegal and demanded

inquiry into the matter. "The LGRD

minister surrendered a plot in Uttara

and it was allocated to the CEC. Later,

impartial person.

another plot was illegally allocated to the LGRD minister in Banani." he said. Taking floor, Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas launched a blistering attack on Noor-e-Alam for giving "false" information in parliament.

Claiming the allegation untrue, he said, "I am not prepared today; I will explain Earlier, at the beginning of the sitting, AL lawmaker Mohammad

Nasim demanded discussion on the government's "failure and misrule". He also protested the LGRD minister's remark that the AL has joined the Ending the unscheduled debate the speaker said some non-

parliamentary words used during the

debate will be expunded from the

House proceedings.

40pc less FROM PAGE 16 yesterday [Tuesday] and have not noticed any kind of diesel or kerosene

crisis in any petrol pump on the way,

Mahmudur, who is also the

Chairman of Investment Corporation of Bangladesh, said some media are not portraying the right picture about the country's petroleum situation. Refuting a newspaper report that Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC)'s importing 40 percent less

sible for the petroleum crisis, Mahmudur said there is enough storage of petroleum in the country. On January 18 and the following two or three days, the northern part of the country faced petroleum crisis due

to the process of supply, not storage,

He said the public as well as private

He also urged all petroleum-run

vehicle owners to convert their vehi-

cles into CNG-run ones in order to

petroleum in this fiscal year is respon-

companies have to maintain the CNG (Compressed Natural Gas) safety codes and standard strictly to avoid casualties due to cylinder blasts of CNG-run vehicles.

he added.

reduce pressure on petroleum. Asian Development Bank (ADB) Officer-in-Charge in Bangladesh Hua Du said the price of petroleum oil in the international marker is increasing day by day and so CNG conversion will be very much beneficial for the country's economic development.

Trained and certified workers

should do the CNG conversion task

and the cylinder and other kits used in

the vehicles must be certified too,

AMM Nasir Uddin, Secretary of

Energy and Mineral Resources Division said. Petrobangla Chariman M Musharraf Hossain Bhuivan, RPGCL Managing Director Abdul Wadud and Project Director of Dhaka Clean Fuel Project (DCFP) AKM Shafiqur Rahman also spoke at the inaugural session.

DCFP team leader Osvaldo Juvier

and Standard, Regulatory framework

on CNG technology. Prof Dr M Anwarul Azaim. Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University of Engineering and Technology, presided over the session.

the prevailing religious harmony. The US congressman, who

Joseph Crowley also lauded

The progress of the construction

"We have discussed many things

The pirates also mercilessly beat up other policemen injuring them Witnessing the additional police and

Mottakin, 32, and constables Abdus Sattar, 45, Tajul Islam, 44, and M Wasim, 35, were admitted to Chandpur Sadar Hospital. Mottakin sustained bullet wounds in his leg.

the extortionists. Later, Didar along with his hooli-

presented a paper on 'Safety Codes hacked him indiscriminately. Critically and DCFP's CNG conversion engiinjured Ameer succumbed to his neer Dr BP Pundir presented a paper injuries in Dhaka Medical College and Hospital two days later. Public Prosecutor Nabi Hossain moved for the state while Suruj Ali,

Crowley, a co-sponsor of the Trade Bill, 2005 seeking duty-free

be passed sometime in 2007. About the purpose of this visit, the third since 1998. Crowley said he has come to thank the government for the steps against trafficking in women

He once again thanked Prime Minister Khaleda Zia for protecting the interests of the minority communities but expressed concerns at the growing trend of fundamentalism. He said he is also concerned about corruption, as Bangladesh has been

nated attacks can be launched by the He appreciated the prime minister's determination to rout the terrorists and destroy their networks, saying the prime minister clearly stated that fundamentalism would not be tolerated in Bangladesh. Crowley also commended Khaleda Zia for setting up the Counter-Terrorism Bureau with the assistance of US experts to enhance the capabil-

November 29, 2004 had issued the contempt rule upon the nine officials for distorting the SC directives.

been found in a dead swan on an island in the Adriatic. On Wednesday Malaysia took its

blue overalls, anti-viral masks and 400.000 birds in Maharashtra, of which Mumbai is the capital. newspaper said the culling process

suffered from defects because many

and eggs are safe to eat but that assurance has failed to calm consumers in many countries.

mance in the education sector of Bangladesh. He emphasised improving the standard of school education and undertaking crash programmes for

Trivandrum city, Kerala, India.

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cess lacked transparency. Following the suit, the High Court

the purchase of the planes.

Major Shia shrine

also wrecked. An Interior Ministry spokesman said the attackers wore police uniforms, tied up the mosque

through the capital, condemning the Black-clad militiamen of the Mehdi Army, loyal to Shia cleric

to a motorcycle.

ward incidents

100 injured