

Tarique took millions out of country, lost \$230m in KL, AL MPs allege

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two Awami League (AL) lawmakers yesterday launched a broadside against the prime minister's son and Senior Joint Secretary General of the ruling BNP Tarique Rahman in parliament, accusing him of

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## 10 killed in Chittagong RMG factory fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

At least 10 female workers were burned alive and over 100 injured in a fire at a composite textile factory that also had a garment section in the city last night.

Sources said the fire broke out at a factory of KTS, a composite textile mill of Arina Group, at BSCIC

Industrial Area in Kalurghat at around 7:20pm.

The fire originated from an unknown source soon engulfed the entire four-storey building. Sources and witnesses said bamboo and woods used in an under construction part of the building fuelled the blazes.

Twenty fire tenders rushed to

the scene and rescued around 100 victims, some of whom severely burned, with the help of locals and pedestrians.

At least 60 were rushed to Chittagong Medical College and Hospital (CMCH) and three of them died on the way, sources said. Firefighters pulled the charred

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## Govt sits on projects as power sector collapses

Fickle political will, questionable bidding bring darkness

SHARIEF KHAN

Despite being burdened with serious failure in the power sector, the government is yet to implement adequate power projects to meet the demand at present and in the immediate future, sources say.

Two very costly power projects now under implementation are suffering delays due to inefficiency of the developers and fund crisis. Around 10 other projects are either being re-tendered or gathering

dust with the authorities due to lack of directions and also repeated shifting of decisions.

Not a single power project bid under the BNP-led coalition government is free from allegations of favouring certain bidders. And this is the major reason behind government failure in the power sector, the sources pointed out.

Power Development Board (PDB) officials say, the government inaction over the years has created such a terrible situation that even if

the government undertook a good number of new power projects today there will be no respite from load shedding till 2008. Power plants require several years to come into operation, they pointed out.

The previous Awami League (AL) government however implemented private power projects like two large AES or four barge-mounted power plants without any allegations of favouring any bidder. "This shows power projects can be

properly implemented in this country if there is political will," observed an industry insider.

Due to lack of political will and drive, the recent government decision to implement 'load management' measures also remain ignored. The power ministry held a meeting with business leaders on this matter and they agreed to keep the city shopping malls and commercial enterprises shut after evening to save up to 500 megawatt of power.

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### WIDENING RICH-POOR GAP

## Stipends end up in wrong hands

INAM AHMED

Sharmin Akhtar and Sultana Khatun both are in grade VII. They study in the same school -- Purbo Tengri Girls High School in Pabna. But the likeness just ends there.

Sharmin receives the government-introduced stipend -- Tk 150 every six months. She does not need the money, though, to carry on schooling; her father is a well-off man, doing business in shallow tube-wells.

But Sultana is at the end of the line. Her mother works as a home help, father plies rickshaw. And she does not get any stipend either. She could not buy textbooks last year. For her, every bit of money matters.

Sharmin and Sultana showcase how the government's stipends for schoolchildren end up in wrong hands for conceptual problems and feed the rich-poor divide.

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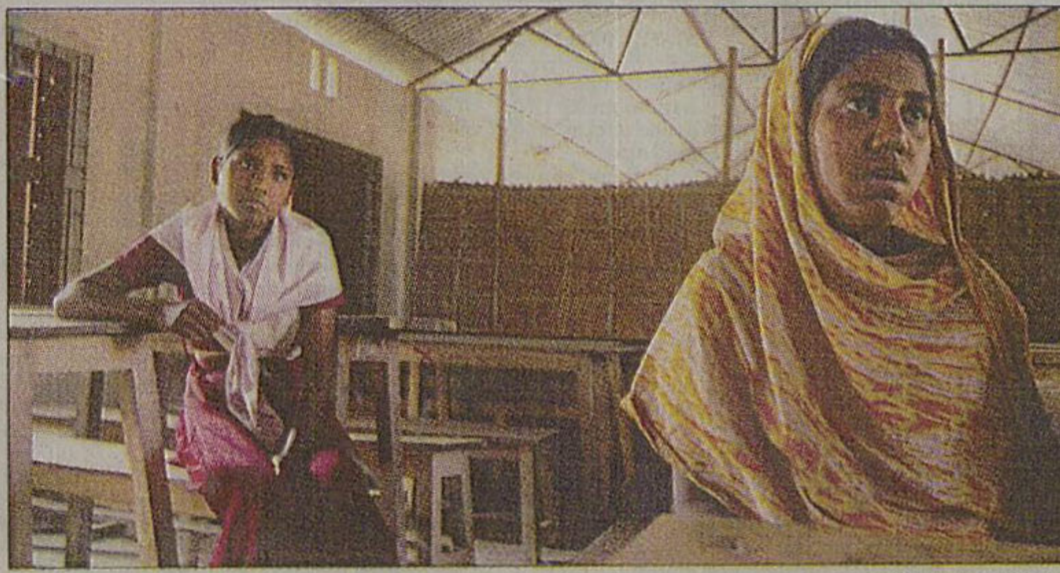


PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

Seventh grade student Sultana Khatun, right, daughter of a rickshawpuller and a domestic help, is deprived of the government stipend that she needs so much.

### FERTILISER CRISIS

## Farmers hem in govt offices in 2 districts

STAR REPORT

The fertiliser-starved farmers in Satkhira, Rajshahi and Jamalpur yesterday laid siege to local government offices and a UNO, demanding a steady supply of fertilisers during the peak season for boro cultivation.

At least 10 farmers were reported injured in a clash with law enforcers while laying siege to two upazila headquarters in Satkhira. Vehicular movement on Satkhira-Kaliganj Road remained disrupted for four hours.

The farmers have threatened to go for tougher programmes if their demands are not met immediately, report our correspondents.

The main opposition Awami League (AL) and other political parties also staged demonstrations for fertiliser in different places. They laid siege to local government offices, protesting the nation-wide crisis of fertilisers.

Meanwhile, the government yesterday engaged 20 OSD (officer on special duty) deputy secretaries to monitor the industries ministry's

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### PRINCIPAL AMOUNT WAIVER

## Bankers find new BB policy unprecedented

But governor claims it's more rigid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On top of making a way for handing out fresh loans to defaulters, the new loan rescheduling policy of the Bangladesh Bank offers an unprecedented option for banks to waive even the principal amount of defaulted loans, former central bank top executives said.


The Bangladesh Bank in a circular on February 14 said, "If there is any principal waiver, no fresh

facility will be allowed till the full settlement of compromise amount."

A number of public and private bank officials said this provision would put the banks under pressure for waiving both the interests and the principal amounts of rescheduled loans, upsetting the credit discipline.

The World Bank country chief and a former central bank governor

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Congratulations to  AKTEL

We would like to congratulate AKTEL on achieving 3 million consumer base and a 30% market share as the result of its firm commitment & relentless pursuit. We also congratulate them for showing a world class performance by achieving 850,000 subscribers in a single month (December 2005) as mentioned in the 3GSM world congress held at Barcelona.

AKTEL has always been committed to Bangladesh on improving the country's mobile connectivity. With obvious reflection of this commitment AKTEL has made the country's highest and largest ever frame contract of USD 200 million for network expansion. We are proud to be a part of it.

The vision of HUAWEI is to enrich lives through communication. HUAWEI would like to take the privilege to congratulate AKTEL to be its technology partner and also privileged to be a dominant player of the telecommunication industry of Bangladesh.

We wish continued success to AKTEL in keeping the people ahead and winning many more millions of hearts in year 2006.

