NEWS

Power sector collapses

plant (2005).

are Westmont 40 MW barge

mounted plant (2004) and Tongi 80

MW simple cycle peaking power

Harbin of China, is one of the worst

performing plant in a decade. The

plant kept on tripping right from the

beginning of test operation early last

year, and also during its guaranteed

tion government cancelled or sus-

pended a number of major power

projects for 'questionable' bidding

process but it started pursuing new

power projects by resorting to

questionable' bidding process,

The cancelled or suspended

projects include Khulna 210 MW

(CC) plant, Sylhet 150 MW CC

plant. Bheramara 450 MW CC plant

and Bhola 20 MW plant. Except the

Bhola plant, the others were

financed under Supplier's Credit, a

corruption prone financing system

discouraged' by the BNP govern-

four times the cost of PDB's Sikalbaha simple cycle 70 MW

plant, this project is suffering from

fund crisis. The fund crisis was

one new agreement to set up a 90

MW CC power plant in Fenchuganj

The bid went to Chinese Harbin

which appears to have government

favour despite its lack of qualifica-

tion and poor performance in the

Tongi plant. The government is processing

another agreement with Harbin for

the PDB's Chandpur 150 MW CC

power plant. This bid went to Harbin

although the company grossly violated tender rules and a govern-

After assuming office, the coali-

commercial operation period.

sources mentioned.

But the Tongi plant, built by

recent tenure as spokesman for the state department in May 2000 under

Secretary Albright and continued as

spokesman throughout the tenures of

Secretary Powell and Secretary Rice

He had previously served as the

department's deputy spokesman

under Secretary Baker, starting in

1989, and became the spokesman for

Secretary Eagleburger in August 1992

and served for Secretary Christopher

He served as US ambassador to

Cyprus from October 1993 to June

1996 and as the consul general in US

Consulate General in Hong Kong from

official for Asia-Pacific Economic

Cooperation (Apec) from July 1999 to

A career foreign service officer,

Boucher entered the Foreign Service

in 1977. His early career focused on

Boucher was born in Bethesda

Marvland in 1951. He obtained his

Bachelor's degree in 1973 from Tufts

University and did his graduation in

economics at George Washington

University. He speaks French and

Chinese. He is married and has two

Mohammed Farashuddin, now

president of the East West

University, said this circular would

encourage loan defaulters. "Influen-

tial borrowers now will pressure the

banks to waive their principal

amounts as well as the interests." he

interests are waived in special cases,

the principal amounts are never

Bank appear to be under pressure

from certain guarters. This has

become evident with the recent relax-

ation of the guidelines issued by

Bangladesh Bank on defaulters

accessing fresh loans," WB Country

Director Christine Wallich remarked at

election politics may also be influenc-

ing the regulatory side of the financial

of principal amount waiver in

Bangladesh Bank's new guidelines,

the banks now will face harassment

and lobbying," former BB deputy

governor Khandker Ibrahim Khaled

principal amount. In case of the nation-

alised commercial banks, the finance

ministry can consider such a waiver

not the banks. But, other than the farm

loans, the government too does not

borrowers were regular or not in

repaying the rescheduled loans for

one year or until full repayment, which

securing NOC is nothing new, it is an

established practice. But the banks

issue such NOCs only after monitoring

the borrowers' performance for at least

one year. The new circular has

scrapped this option. Because, the

settlement of just 7.5 or 15 percent [of

the rescheduled loan] does not give

the time or scope for assessing the

Senior Executive Vice President

Delwar Hossain also stated that the

principal amount is never waived and

feared that the new provision would

Trains are not stopping here and

trucks are being parked at a site

four-km away from town. It's a kind

spark undue pressure on the banks.

Bird flu-hit

At the BUBT seminar, IFIC Bank

borrower's commitment to repayment.

"Banks used to monitor if the

waive the principal amount."

He said "Banks cannot waive a

She apprehended that "Pre-

"As there is an affirmative mention

Wednesday's BUBT seminar.

He, too, pointed out that, though

"Government and Bangladesh

economic affairs. China and Europe.

He led US efforts as the US senior

until June 2005.

until June 1993.

1996 to 1999.

April 2000.

children.

waived

sector"

told The Daily Star.

Fertiliser crisis

the country. Four days ago, a central monitoring committee was formed to oversee marketing of fertiliser and fuel in 16 districts. SATKHIRA

Hundreds of farmers yesterday laid siege to local agriculture office at Kolaroa upazila for fertilisers.

Police swooped on the demonstrating farmers at about 2:00pm, leaving at least 10 injured. The local police claimed that the farmers vandalised furniture of the office

In a separate incident, over 2,000 farmers barricaded Satkhira-Kaliganj Road in Debhata upazila, disrupting communications for more than four hours yesterday.

Earlier in the morning, the farmers went to Parulia Bazar to buy fertilisers But on finding an acute shortage of urea and accompanying high price, they went berserk. They set up barricade on the road and staged a sit-in at around 7:00am, causing a huge snarl-

Besides, the demonstrators hemmed in Debhata Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Ali Kader as soon as he reached the scene of the demonstrations. He let him go only after he assured the farmers of an adequate supply of fertiliser within 2:00pm.

Meanwhile, AL demonstrated in Shyamnagar, Tala and Sadar upazilas in the district.

In Shyamnagar, some 3,000 people participated in the opposition's programme of laying siege to the local UNO office. The AL leaders blasted the government for its failure to supply fertiliser during the peak season for boro cultivation.

Satkhira Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Ilias at a press briefing vesterday said the fertiliser crises in the district will be solved within two or three days

RAJSHAH

Hundreds of farmers from five villages under Mohanpur upazila vesterday blocked the Rajshahi-Naogoan Highway at Kamarpara for over an hour, beginning at 11:00am.

They also laid siege to the UNO Office and submitted a memorandum to the UNO. They said they will go for even tougher movement if an uninterrupted supply of fertiliser is not ensured immediately. JESSORE

The fertiliser crisis in Jessore seems to have eased up of late, reports BDNEWS.

Even a few days ago, a long queue of farmers in front of the fertiliser sale centres was a common scene, but the situation now appear to be much improved due to intervention by the Bangladesh Chemical Industries

Corporation (BCIC), said sources. The demand for urea fertiliser came down after the BCIC authorities had started distributing among the

originally meant for buffer stocks As of vesterday, the distribution that began last week was still going on.

profit. They said they stored those for

aking NPKS fertiliser. month of March to meet the demand of

the season.

from 11:00 pm to 8:00 pm on Wednesday.

Early Thursday police also reported finding the bodies of three raqi journalists working for Dubai based Arabiya satellite television who were kidnapped near Samarra Wednesday evening while reporting on the shrine bombing. "The bodies of the presenter

Atwar Bahjat, of cameraman Adnan Abdallah and of soundman Khaled Mohsen were found early this morning some 15km north of Samarra," lice said.

people were killed in a powerful roadside bomb attack in Baquba, 60km northeast of Baghdad, of which eight were Iraqi army soldiers and four other civilians, police said, adding 20 others were wounded Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, renewed calls to his community to remain calm and forsake revenge for the bombing of the shrine.

FROM PAGE 20 absence

farmers some 42 tonnes of fertiliser

Meanwhile, on request of Jessore District Fertiliser Monitoring Committee two private fertiliser factories--Ahad Fertiliser Factory and South Bengal Fertiliser Industry -- have supplied 5,000 and 1,000 sacks of urea fertiliser without making any

The Monitoring Committee has asked the BCIC authorities to give the dealers the fertiliser earmarked for the

130 shot dead

FROM PAGE 20 The upsurge in killings came after

suspected al-Qaeda linked militants bombed the 1,000-year-old Imam Ali al-Hadi mausoleum, one of the countries' main Shia shrines, in the vn of Samarra, north of Baghdad.

In other violence, at least 12

Apart from discharging their

noble responsibility of protecting the

country's independence, she said

the members of patriotic armed

forces were also making significant

contributions to the fields of tackling

natural disasters, construction of

infrastructures. socio-economic

developments, maintaining law and

order, providing health care ser-

officers from abroad, Khaleda

hoped that they would act as good-

will ambassadors to foster relations

Congratulating the new graduate

vices and spreading education.

ncident on July 11, 2001.

PM asks armed forces

FROM PAGE 20

Arabia and Sri Lanka participated in the 10-month course. The prime minister distributed

the graduation certificates among the PSC (passed staff course) graduates at the DSCSC auditorium.

Ministers, chiefs of the three services, dean of the diplomatic corps Abdullah M Al-Namla, MPs. senior officers of the armed forces, spouses of the newly graduated officers and distinguished personalities attended the graduation ceremony.

between their country and Addressing the function, the Bangladesh prime minister said despite resource constraints the government is committed to build up a modern, efficient and strong armed force through imparting advanced training.

Mirza Abbas the trial is proceeding in his

Moving the petition, advocates Sanaullah Miah, Masud Ahmed Talukder, Khoshed Alam and Mohammad Ali told the court the accused had earlier obtained bail from the High Court (HC) and they did not misuse the bail privileges.

The acting Public Prosecutor (PP) Sultan Abu Naser however did not oppose the bail petition. Since the accused had obtained bail from HC, the court might consider granting the bail, the PP said.

1,800 MW load-shedding this month, which is very unusual at this Following the hearing, the judge granted bail upon a bond of Tk time," says an official of the PDB. 50,000 with two guarantors. The 'Yet, we see no urgent steps from judge also fixed March 21 for hearthe higher authorities to resolve ng on the charge framing.

such a crisis. Even they do not The same court on January 26 appear to be seriously concerned directed Abbas and four others to about it. appear before it on February 20 but the accused did not appear before been no special drive to increase the court on the day. nower generation guickly although

The case was stayed for a long time following a court rule. HC vacated the stav order on the case

clearing the way for the trial to begin. Constable Abu Naser, 27, was killed at Razarbagh Police Lines in Malibagh on February 2001. According to the prosecution, over 150 activists led by former Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Mirza Abbas brought out a procession during hartal called by the then opposition party BNP around

11:30am on February 13, 2001. They attacked a procession of the then ruling Awami League near Razarbagh Police Lines. Bullets were fired at the police barracks from the BNP procession killing the constable who was standing on the corridor near to his third floor room at Rajabagh Police Lines.

The constable died on the spot and another Constable Partha Roy was also seriously injured in the

Subedar Jamal Uddin filed a murder case with Motijheel Police Station on the same day. The investigation officer pressed charges against Mirza Abbas and five others

MPs trade

FROM PAGE 20 used unparliamentary words during the debate on thanks-giving motion on the president's speech or taking floor on points of order. Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar, however, made no effort to interrupt the lawmakers' indecent debate.

Presiding over the sitting yesterday, the speaker rather provoked AL awmaker Shajahan Khan, who took the floor on the grounds of personal clarification, to specify the name of a lawmaker who had made indecent remarks in parliament on Wednesday.

On repeated urge of the speaker, Shajahan told the House that ruling BNP lawmaker Helen Zerin Khan made derogatory remarks against him and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina. Shajahan himself also used a few offensive words attacking Helen personally

The BNP deputy immediately demanded floor to counter the AL

actually running the power sector While these projects were cancelled because of supplier's He added that just because the credit, in 2004 the government signed an agreement with a

ment.

year or two

grant.

previous AL government had taken up some power projects during its Chinese consortium to install tenure, the present government Barapukuria 250 MW power plant enjoyed its benefits in the first couple of years of its rule. But it will leave the country in a serious power crisis by the time it hands over power to the caretaker government.

FROM PAGE 1 country if there is political will,'

Due to lack of political will and

drive, the recent government deci-

sion to implement 'load manage-

ment' 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 com-

mercial enterprises shut after eve-

power

ning to save up to 500 megawatt of

"We are experiencing 800 MW to

Another official said, "There has

the higher authorities have been

talking about some skid-mounted

power plants since last year. We are

like business as usual

observed an industry insider.

The country's total power generation now is 4,100 MW while the demand is 3,900 MW. But as of yesterday, various power plants remained shut due to technical glitches or maintenance work. As a result, load-shedding hovered around 856 MW yesterday, 867 MW a day before and so on

This summer the demand for power is likely to rise up to 4,500-5,000 MW. PDB sources said even the best efforts cannot prevent a load-shedding level of 1,000 MW because adequate power projects are not in the pipeline.

The government has recently revived the four-vear old Sikalbaha 150 MW combined cycle (CC) power project and a tender is likely to be floated soon. This would be financed under the PDB.

Besides, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has agreed to finance two 120 MW plants in Siddhirganj. This project was conceived four years ago. In addition, the World Bank will finance a 120 MW unit at the same site

Sources say, these three units may be implemented eventually. Two power projects implemented by this government so far

Stipends end up

FROM PAGE 1 vanishes into 'unseen' pockets

what the teacher taught."

sucked into semi-literacy.

cultivable land in Pabna.

According to the government rules, a student has to secure at least 45 percent marks in exams and 75 percent attendance to get the stipend -both feats difficult for a poor child to attain for a waft of reasons.

Sultana says why she failed in three subjects - English, mathematics and Bangla grammar. not have the b

rickshawpuller father afford a tutor for

studies in school." she savs. "And at

home, I have no one to help me out.

Sometimes, I take help of a girl in the

neighbourhood, but she also does not

Both her father and mother are

The stipend system also spins off

But, those who do not get the

stipend, mostly the poor like the

eighth-grader Afsana Khatun Bithi,

have to pay school fees. Her father, a

iobless man, has no means to pay the

amount. Her sister, who earns by

sewing and offering private tuition, can

Here lies another paradox for

hardly meet Bithi's school fees.

another kind of discrimination. Those

who get the award, such as Sumaiya

"I don't understand most of the

supposed to get them free. Hasna of class five comes from a day labourer's family.

"We have to pay for books as the teachers say they have to spend money from their pockets to collect books from the town," Hasna says.

Sheuli, a grade-six student of Kurigram, says last year she could buy only half of the books required, as his

ment review committee took a stand against it. The agreement will be signed when the prime minister approves it.

Besides, the government is processing an agreement with BON consortium --comprising Orion Power, Steag and Belhasa -- for the 450 MW Meghnaghat-2 private power project amid gross violation of tender rules. None of the three companies in the consortium had submitted bid to qualify in this tender. Industry insiders express doubts whether these inexperienced companies would ever be able to implement this project.

If the government had not cancelled the finalised bid to Summit Power on the 450 MW Sirajganj private power project in early 2004, this plant would have started partial power generation by now. Since that cancellation, the project is going for repeated retendering while power developers are increasingly losing interest.

Moreover, a section of officials of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) is pushing ahead an unsolicited bid for Meghnaghat-3 power project although the policy and rules do not support such bids. Industry insiders also dismiss the possibility of this scheme.

under a supplier's credit agreement. Instead of re-tendering another Some of the worst implemented bid because of changes in the power projects under this governpolicy, the PDB is trying to award the ment include Barapukuria coal-fired 210 MW Siddhirganj phase-2 power 250 MW plant, which was supposed project to Orion and NEPC. The to start operation last year. But now original bid floated in 2002 sought supplier's credit financing while the even the most optimistic forecast puts off the operation till April. Some Orion-NEPC proposed commercial officials also say the plant may not financing. Then the government's go for commercial operation in a policy on supplier's credit became restrictive. But the PDB did not re-Another ultra costly project under tender this project under the new implementation is Mymensingh 70 policy and kept on modifying the MW Phase- 3 CC plant of Rural tender documents apparently to Power Company (RPC). Being built award contract for the project to at a cost of \$120 million, which is Orion-NEPC.

Shamsul Hug FROM PAGE 20

caused by the RPC's corruption, of this renowned intellectual to which led one of the project's finaneducation and said his service to the ciers to withdraw a 20-million euro nation as a successful foreign minister will be remembered. The government now has only

She prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed her sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

on Wednesday, Salehuddin said In his condolence message, the bad loans to the tune of Tk 10,000 president recalled the contributions crore has been written off so far. It of this great educationist as a central education minister of the erstincludes the principal amounts too. while Pakistan and a foreign minister of Bangladesh. amounts were not waived before,'

The president also prayed for the salvation of the departed soul and conveyed his deep sympathy to the bereaved family.

Nizami FROM PAGE 20

taken up following the estimate. Nizami said a total of 18 lakh 43 As a primary schoolchild she was

thousand tons of fertiliser has been raise a great hue and cry, you will supplied to farmers till February 21 this year. There is enough stock of fertiliser to meet demands till March. There will see." Salehuddin told the press be no shortage of fertiliser in the different things, bankers pointed current season, he added. out. In write-offs, bad loans are

The minister said the demand of shifted from the regular accounts fertiliser in February stands at 4.46 and the banks go to courts to realise lakh tons while a total of 3.42 lakh ton them. Those are not relinquished at fertilisers had been supplied. Another 1.18 lakh metric ton fertilisers are

Boucher replaces

FROM PAGE 20 Central Asian Affairs as the assistant secretary of state.

He replaced Assistant Secretary of State Christina B Rocca. According to the State Department,

Richard A Boucher was sworn in as the new assistant secretary of state for South and Central Asian Affairs on February 21. The State Department recently

ransferred policy responsibility for five Central Asian nations -- Kazakhstan Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan -- from the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs to the Bureau of South Asian Affairs.

The newly expanded and improved bureau was renamed as Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs.

The expanded bureau will now deal with US foreign policy and US relations with the countries of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan

Over the course of his career, Boucher served as the Department of State's spokesman and deputy spokesman under six secretaries of state and has served as chief of mission twice overseas. In 2005, Boucher became the

FROM PAGE 1

new policy.

more stringent.

the governor argued.

policy.

longest serving assistant secretary for public affairs in the Department of State's history. He began his most

are also among the veteran bankers

who have expressed concern at the

interests of a certain guarter right

before the general election,

observed many of them.

It is aimed at serving the vested

However, BB Governor

Salehuddin Ahmed denied the

allegation and claimed the policy

rather has made loan rescheduling

Non-Performing Loans in Banking

Sector in Bangladesh' organised by

the Bangladesh University of

Business and Technology (BUBT)

"So, it's not correct that principal

He named the requirements of

obtaining no objection certificate

(NOC) from the rescheduling bank

to process a fresh loan from any

other bank and sending reschedul-

ing-related information to the Credit

Information Bureau (CIB) as two

stringent measures in the amended

"These provisions are going to

But, write-off and waiver are

After a seminar on 'Status of

Bankers find

She said the role of the armed forces have become multidimensional in the context of the changed security scenario in the present day world

The prime minister observed that this should be reflected in the field of education and training programmes for the armed forces. She described the armed forces as a symbol of the country's independence and sovereignty.

"We have friendly ties with your countries. We are hopeful that the participants.

Earlier on her arrival, the prime minister was received by the Commandant of the DSCSC Maj Gen Md Aminul Karim.

DSCSC.

AL sticks to demand

discussion

issues

fertiliser.

FROM PAGE 1

while participating in the thanks giving motion on the president's speech also blasted the four-party government for its 'failure' to provide the farmers with necessary agricultural inputs. Responding to the AL lawmak

ers' demand, the treasury bench members said the BAC has unanimously decided that no discussion on any specific issue would be held. "It is true that the Awami League

had demanded discussion on 10 issues at the meeting of the Business Advisory Committee, but the meeting unanimously decided not to hold any discussion," Chief Whip Khandakar Delwar Hossain replied to the AL lawmakers.

The chief whip said there was no difference of views at the BAC meeting held on February 16. He requested the speaker to run the House as per the decision of the BAC.

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar, also the chairman of BAC, made similar comments. He said: "We have unanimously agreed that the lawmakers will raise all the points while participating in the discussion on thanks giving motion on the president's speech.

But the AL lawmakers said the decision was not taken unanimously. "The ruling party had the majority in the Business Advisory Committee to decide against holding any discussion. We did not agree with the decision. We are still demanding discussions," Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdul Hamid countered the chief whip.

ties will be deepened through your training at this Staff College," the prime minister told the foreign

Earlier, Opposition Chief Whip

Abdus Shahid initiated the debate

citing Wednesday's statement of

Chief Whip Khandakar Delwar in

which he claimed that the Business

Advisory Committee had unani-

mously decided not to hold any

did not agree with the ruling party's

statement. "We are still demanding

discussion at least one or two major

Shahid said the opposition party

AL lawmaker Sheikh Fazlul

Karim Selim said how parliament

will be effective if the lawmakers

cannot speak about the issues like

the crises of power, diesel and

The AL lawmakers who partici-

pated in the thanks giving motion on

the president' speech blasted the

government for the crises. The

farmers across the country have

become helpless due to the crisis of

informed the House of the demon-

strations staged by farmers at

different places demanding electric-

giving motion, the lawmakers of

Jatiya Party, the second largest

opposition in parliament, also

lauded the president's speech and

mentioned the development works

carried out by the government.

The ruling alliance MPs however

mentioned the farmers' sufferings.

ity, diesel and fertiliser.

The opposition members

While taking part in the thanks

agricultural inputs, they observed.

Later, the prime minister, who is also chairperson of the governing body of National Defence College (NDC) and Defence Services Command and Staff College, presided over the 7th joint governing body meeting of the NDC and the

lawmaker. LGRD and Cooperatives Minister

Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan also requested the speaker to allow Helen Zerin to give her clarification. He further requested the speaker to expunge all unparliamentary and indecent words from the proceedings of the House.

Earlier. AL lawmaker KM Jahangir Hossain also drew the speaker's attention towards the indecent words used by Helen Zerin against the leader of the opposition.

During the morning session on have time for me. Wednesday, Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas and State uneducated. Minister for Power Iqbal Hasan Mahmud launched blistering attack on the AL and its lawmakers using unparliamentary words.

The speaker told the House that he would expunge all unparliamentary words from the proceedings of the House.

In the evening sitting, however Deputy Speaker Akhtar Hamid Siddigui neither prevented BNP lawmaker Helen Zerin from using indecent words in her speech nor expunded those words from the House proceedings.

During yesterday's morning session of the House, AL lawmaker Mirza Azam initiated a heated attack on the prime minister, her son Tarique Rahman and Hawa Bhaban. The BNP lawmakers protested the

remarks by making noise in the House.

The speaker told the House that he will expunge all unparliamentary and defamatory words against the president and others

leenage

FROM PAGE 20 Nazrul admitted to reporters at the DMCH that Nazrul used to beat up Shilpi sometimes.

Motijheel police last evening said Shilpi's father Sirajul Islam, a scrap metal trader in Mymensingh, came to the police station and filing of a case is under process.

Shibir leader FROM PAGE 20

'We've noticed strong efforts by Jamaat-Shibir leaders to save Shalehi although confessions of three held killers go against him," observed a senior police official. demic performance.

Echoing the police view, RU sources said both the killings were committed days before the elections of the RU Teachers Association.

father, a farm la could not spar subjects," she keeps gazing at the more than Tk 150. The bamboo hut ground. "I asked my father to buy she lives in has no electricity. them, but he could not manage the

"I can't study at night because we money as he was sick with ulcer. I had can't afford to burn kerosene," Sheuli to depend solely on the classroom sighs. "It's difficult for me to continue; I lectures. But I could not understand don't have a table or a chair at home, et alone a private tutor." Neither could Sultana's

At a school in Char Jatrapur. 'Pusti biscuits were being handed out to students in a beeline. The specially nutrition-fortified biscuits are provided by the World Food Programme (WFP) and are supposed to distributed free every day.

Ascraggy Juthi clutches a packet in her small hands.

"Today I could get my biscuits," a smile shows on her face. "I asked my This is the hardest hurdle the first father to give me one taka so that generation of poor students is facing could get them. I hadn't got any for a today. The teachers can pay little long time as my father could not pay." That is what it is -- a free nutrition

individual attention in a classroom packed with students. The better-off programme up for sale. Again, those students then take help of private who do not need additional nutrition tutors. But, in a semi-rural setting, that can buy the extra food. costs at least Tk 300-400. And so, the

In a vast poverty-stricken swath in poor students, who cannot afford the north, education thus gets skewed private tuition, find themselves slowly every day.

larique

FROM PAGE 1 Sultana Mini of class VII, are mostly as he failed to disclose its source," the well-off ones and do not have to KM Jahangir Hossain told the pay school fees. Mini's father is a House participating in the thanks railway employee and owns a fivegiving motion on the president's room house. He has a colour TV. a freeze, gas oven, steel cupboard and speech.

Jahangir did not specify the amount of money.

Participating in the discussion. AL lawmaker Mirza Azam however said the prime minister' son 'lost \$230 million in Malavsia. He also bitterly criticised the

prime minister for her 'luxurious

noisy protest.

security forces." he wanted to know.

Books often are one of them and play a crucial role in a student's acapower, diesel and fertiliser crises At Madhyakumorpur Girls Primary that have been greatly hampering School, Parvin, daughter of a

being supplied following the demand in February. The availability of fertiliser would stand at 4.60 lakh metric tons this month

On the other hand, the total demand of fertiliser in March is 2.75 lakh tons while the stocked fertiliser would stand at 3.15 lakh tons.

He said electronic media and several newspapers published news saying IRRI and boro cultivation might be hampered due to fertiliser crisis in the current season.

According to the Department of Aariculture Extension, 87,43 percent of IRRI and boro cultivation have been completed across the country within February 19, 2006.

Hasina

FROM PAGE 20

The former prime minister, who placed the reform proposals in parliament on Februarv12, reiterated that the BNP-led coalition government is manipulating the voter list to rig the next general election.

"The alliance government wants to snatch the peoples' democratic right to vote. It is conspiring to capture power again through rigged election." Hasina alleged. She urged the people to foil this move.

The AL chief asked her party leaders and activists to resist 'vote thieves' in every village, union upazila and district.

She blamed the then president, caretaker government chief, security personnel, law enforcers and civil administration for what she said is helping the BNP-led alliance to rig the election in 2001. Anti-liberation forces are siding with the alliance to avenge their defeat in 1971, she added

The government has increased prices of essentials and is patronising militants in planned ways to make the country dysfunctional and destroy the sprit of the Liberation War, she alleged.

Referring to the crises of power, diesel, fertiliser and seeds, Hasina accused the present rulers of creating the artificial crises just to make monev

She also mentioned developments in various sectors under the previous AL government.

different spots. Laxmipur district AL President MA Alauddin. Chapainwabganj AL Joint Situations Minister Sergei Shoigu said Convenor and Bhramanbaria AL at the scene. Presidnet Lutful Hai also spoke on the occasion. AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil, Motia Chowdhury the victims." He added: "It is necessary Suranjit Sengupta, Mohiuddin Khan to conduct a detailed inquiry and get Alamgir and Obaidul Quader were objective information about the reasons" for the collapse. present

elped them decide whether to issue The February 14 BB circular any fresh credit to them or not. But the cancelled a bar imposed on January new circular has taken away this 13, 2003 on loan defaulters from monitoring time," remarked Ibrahim. getting fresh loan within one year of incumbent managing director of loan rescheduling or until full repay-Pubali Bank ment. He pointed out that the condition of

Instead, the amended policy has made scopes for them to get fresh loans by repaying 7.5 to 15 percent of the rescheduled amounts.

On February 18, the central bank sent a clarification to media houses on the February 14 circular, claiming that "the conditions in the circular is not soft at all on loan defaulters".

The Daily Star in the last few days has talked with a number of top bankers. All of them opposed the new policy.

"I don't understand why the Bangladesh Bank circular has mentioned waiver of principal amount. I had worked at a nationalised commercial bank for a long time, but I never saw any waiver of principal amount," a top official of a private bank told The Daily Star.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, former BB governor

44 die in Moscow

said Oktay Salmanov, a market trader

from Azerbaijan. "I was standing near

the main entrance and that's why I

managed to get out in time. But my

three sisters are dead and so is the

that 44 people had died and 29 were

the injured included one victim in

critical condition, 12 in serious condi-

tion and 10 more suffering from lesser

injuries, RIA-Novosti news agency

disaster, sending up thick clouds of

acrid smoke and hampering rescuers

efforts as they searched with sniffer

Emergency workers ordered

"Time is running out," Emergency

President Vladimir Putin said that

'rescuers are doing all they can to help

A fire briefly broke out after the

Rescue authorities told reporters

The Moscow health authority said

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injured.

reported.

even greater carnage

man I was working with.'

dogs for any survivors.

A Reuters photographer in Navapur said some but not all schools and colleges appeared to "Everything suddenly caved in," have closed

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of sealing."

In Navapur and surrounding areas, civic and health workers went around on motor-rickshaws making announcements about bird flu to locals, most of whom were ignorant of the disease

Workers also moved door-todoor collecting backyard poultry and destroying them after compensating owners

Alarm is growing at the emergence of the H5N1 virus in India. where hundreds of millions of people live in rural areas side-by-side with livestock and domestic fowl.

Health officials fear that in a nation of more than one billion people, many of whom have little or no access to health services, avian influenza could spread rapidly.

silence every 15 minutes to listen for Bird flu has killed more than 90 sounds of those trapped. At one point people in seven countries since they could be seen rushing to dig at 10 2003

Human victims contract the virus through direct contact with infected birds. Experts fear it is just a matter of time before the virus mutates and spreads easily among people, triggering a pandemic.

"All the attacking, indecent and defamatory words used by Mirza Azam against the president and others will be expunged from the House proceedings," Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar said.

Jahangir also said Tarique is given VIP treatment wherever he goes in the country. "Under which law, jubaraj is provided with VIP treatment like protection by special

lifestyle' and attacked the president referring to a personal affair. As Azam ended his deliberation.

treasury bench members staged a

Both the AL lawmakers also blasted the government for the

agricultural production. rickshawpuller, had to pay Tk 5 to the

parents. They know, as the government campaigns, that education for airls is free. "I also knew that." said a headmaster in Natore. "But then I received this letter."

The letter from the education ministry says the schools should charge tuition fees from girls who do not get stipends. And so, Bithi, Sultana and many others like them have to pay

teachers to get six books for class III

for schooling. Not only are they deprived of the stipend, these poor children have to bear other costs too, some of which they are supposed to get free.