

source.

coast

The BSC also charges the BPC

The country annually requires

2.5 percent address commission

on the freight in exchange of

23 lakh tonnes of diesel, 5.2 lakh

tonnes of kerosene, 2.5 lakh

tonnes of jet fuel and 2.95 lakh

tonnes of gasoline. Of this, the

Eastern Refinery processes

imported crude oil and produces

4 lakh tonnes of diesel, 3.5 lakh

tonnes of kerosene, 1 lakh

tonnes of jet fuel and 1 lakh

oil represents about one third of

the total oil import. Imported

finished petroleum is costlier even

after the crude is processed into

finished product at the country's

The Eastern Refinery set up about

35 years ago processes around

13 lakh tonnes of imported crude

oil a year and meets nearly one

consumption has dramatically

increased, the government made

no effort to revamp it to increase

processing capacity of the refin-

ery to save valuable foreign cur-

Although over the years, the oil

EASTERN REFINERY

REMAINS IGNORED

third of the country's needs.

petroleum products.

In other words, import of crude

chartering ships for it.

tonnes of gasoline.

lone refinery

Families of five

Signs of panic as bird flu | Poor planning takes wing in Europe

AFP. Paris

A French mayor banning chicken from school canteens. Germans abandoning cats by the hundreds, Greeks and Italians virtually axing poultry from their diets are all signs that a worried Europe is inching toward what some have called a bird flu psychosis.

In Austria, a provincial hospital in Burgenland has even reserved 20 percent of its beds for possible bird flu patients, even though no human nfections have been reported anywhere in Europe.

Indeed, despite assurances from officials that health risks are negligible, an edgy public is taking its own, not always rational, precautions against the deadly virus.

Their first line of defence has been to stop eating poultry, even if experts have said that cooked fowl poses no threat.

In countries where there have been avian outbreaks of the deadly H5N1 strain, poultry sales have been hit especially hard.

In Greece, consumption has plummeted by 75 percent in three weeks, according to the country's largest poultry farmers' association. "If sales continue falling at this rate, poultry farms may have to close association head Spyros Nonikas told AFP on Friday.

Fearing a public panic, Nonikas has urged the Greek broadcasting regulator to ensure that TV channels are "more moderate about what they say on this issue."

In Italy, where poultry meat sales have dropped off by 70 percent since an H5N1 outbreak among wild, migra-tory birds, many butchers have simply

stopped selling chicken and duck

Ă special hotline set up by the nistry of health is fielding an average of 3000 calls a day, many asking about the risks posed by pets following the confirmation Thursday that a cat in Germany was killed by the highly pathogenic H5N1 strain, the first

ropean known case in a mammal. In Germany itself, hundreds of cat owners have abandoned their pets, and some have sought to have them put down, the German animal welfare ciety said.

'Nationwide, several hundred cats have been left with us. People are scared their cats have bird flu," a spokesman for the group told AFP. In France, mayor Joel Boutier of

oslay, a small town north of Paris, banned chicken from school dinners 'following numerous appeals from worried parents," he said. The ban provoked angry reactions

from poultry producers. Martin Malvy, president of the Midi-Pyrenees region which includes a major chicken farming area in the Gers epartment, wrote to Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin asking him to condemn the measure as "inoppore and unjustified."

The gathering panic across Europe reatens to have a ruinous impact on the continent's multi-billion dollar poultry industry, as well as ancillary sectors such as feed suppliers.

Europe's largest poultry producer, the Brittany-based Doux group, announced Thursday that it would temporarily cut 500 to 600 jobs -- 10 to 15 percent of the company's workforce in France -- until at least June 30. A drop in sales of 25 to 30 percent just in the last week has come on top of

an earlier fall of 15 to 20 percent since October 2005, a company spokesman said.

In Bosnia, sales have dropped off 90 percent, a spokesman for an association grouping 300 poultry farmers said Friday.

The German federation of poultry farmers estimated Friday that bird flu had already cost its members 134 million euros (160 million dollars) since last fall.

Politicians, health officials and even a Catholic bishop have all tried to calm public fears.

In Greece's northern region of Thessaloniki, where a bird flu outbreak has axed poultry consumption by 80 percent, local authorities and schools have launched information campaigns, and poultry producers offered 1,500 grilled chickens on Wednesday to passers-by in the port city of Salonika.

In France, the bishop of Aire et Dax in the southwest -- the country's largest poultry and foie grasproducing region -- appealed to his lock to keep eating chicken.

"I ask Catholics in the Landes department to keep their heads, to maintain their traditional habits and to eat poultry as usual, notably during the season of Lent which has just begun," Philippe Breton said in message to be read out in churches over the weekend

Rahman as the man, who knows

Investigators believe if Rahman's

statements during interrogation give

them leads to trap the so-called

Bangla Bhai and other few top militant

leaders, activities of JMB could well be

with investigators of some developed

countries. "We are open if it's neces-

contained.

sarv.'

every detail of JMB, Gulzar added.

Jamuna, Padma and Meghna-three of the government's oil

distribution subsidiaries, sources say. Jamuna incurs a massive consider setting up a 15-km long loss from oil distribution while Padma Oil, which is a publicouter anchorage to oil mooring private joint venture, makes good The ships carrying finished petroprofit doing the same job. leum are lighter and they can come within about 10 km of the

"Policymakers talk a lot about smuggling of petroleum products. But where do the smugglers get them? They get it from the coastal tankers. If the policymakers really mean business, they must stop such pilferage," a top official noted

Furthermore, the country's petroleum storage facilities built in the early seventies can only maintain fuel inventory for 30 days. This threatens petroleum security and also puts the nation at a disadvantage in purchasing larger quantum of oil when the price is comparatively low.

According to oil industry sources, to meet the domestic oil demand growth of 10 percent a vear, the government must follow a policy of upgrading discharging facilities, storage capacity and crude oil refining capacity.

Back in 1971 the country consumed only 150,000-200,000 tonnes of petroleum. The demand shot up to 3.5 million tonnes in 2005-06. Yet, the country's petroleum import, storage and processing infrastructures, which were set up in the early seventies, hardly expanded to meet the growing demand.

Roughly, petroleum related infrastructure grew on make-shift basis, like expanding storage facilities only by 30 percent over the years, which is too inadequate, noted an official

Processing cost of crude oil at DEMURRAGE AND LOSSES the refinery is 70 percent cheaper While unloading imported crude than that in Singapore or other oil from ships from Kutubdia. the neighbouring countries. If the BPC invariably pays to the ships a government installs a new distillademurrage of \$400,000 to half a tion column at the refinery, its million dollars for shipment of processing capacity could rise to 100.000 tonnes for delayed dislakh barrels a day from 35,000 charging, beyond the permissible barrels now. time of 36 hours. 'The overall oil procurement

The BPC pays this because it and refining cost would then come cannot unload oil within the perdown," an official pointed out. missible and penalty-free time of "As Bangladesh has to depend 36 to 42 hours. Due to lack of on oil import, it must try to make its appropriate port facility, it takes 8 import as cheap as possible and to 10 days to finish the job while consider a higher inventory to paying a demurrage of \$50,000 a avert sudden energy crisis," he day. Since this is unavoidable, the BPC calculates the oil import price incorporating this loss by asking 10 days laytime for completion of discharge. The demur-

rage stands at \$4 per tonne. Again, the BPC bears the extra cost for unloading crude oil, in smaller instalments technically Muslims protest termed as lightering, from the mother ship in smaller ships FROM PAGE 16 chartered by Bangladesh competition," he told the students.

Shipping Corporation (BSC). Lightering adds an extra cost of \$4 per tonne of crude oil. In addition, on an average, the BPC loses 350 tonnes of crude oil per 100,000 tonnes of shipment as 'ocean loss," adding a loss of

another 22 cents per tonne. The crude-oil carrying shins

girls rescued in took active interest in it," said one

Patuakhali For unloading finished petroleum, the government should

UNB, Patuakhali 10-inch diameter pipeline from Police rescued four girls, abducted

4 abducted

by human traffickers, from the local launch terminal yesterday.

The victims are Hajera, 9, Mariyam, 7, and Jesmin, 12, of Najibpur village in Kalapara upazila,

and Rashida, 8, of Galachipa upazila of the district. Police said they rescued the girls in the afternoon as they cried for

The victims told police that some miscreants had picked up them from Mahipur while they were going to their relatives' house.

Sensing the presence of the law enforcers, the traffickers fled the

Duta unhappy FROM PAGE 16

But the VC said the committee was formed with only members of the syndicate. Nobody from outside the syndicate was included in the committee to maintain its impartiality.

According to the terms of reference of the probe committee, it will investigate only the faults in the tabulation sheets but will not investigate the allegations that the question papers were not kept in the examination controller's strong room before the examinations. possible leakage of those question papers and possible irregularities in evaluating the examination papers.

Duta will officially ask the university authorities to let it know about the terms of reference of the probe committee, as it wants a thorough investigation of the matter. Prot Sharifullah Bhuyian said.

rency spent on import of finished "We will also demand that the university authorities show all the documents to Duta president and secretary, so they could not be tampered with.

Earlier, Duta held an urgent general meeting on February 19 and asked the university authorities to form a facts finding committee to facilitate a thorough investigation and wanted to see the tabulation sheets, as it is having a crisis of confidence on the authorities, said Prof Bhuyian.

Sources said there are some strong suspicions about where the question papers were kept before the examinations, possible leakage of those questions, and evaluation of the examination papers, so Duta might ask the authorities to change the terms of reference of the probe committee to cover all the allegations

The VC said if any one comes with proper evidence of question paper leakage and other matters, those must be investigated.

26 arrested FROM PAGE 1

Most of the

it is almost like blasphemy. We want to establish Islamic rule in the country," said Saidur Rahman during interrogation.

read or write Arabic and were being

taught Quranic verses in Bangla

victims get **TK 79,000 each**

Office

family members or relatives of the K

fire victims to contact the BGMEA

leaders directly at Agrabad BGMEA

Minister Abdullah Al Noman urged

the BGMEA leaders to compel all the

garment factory owners to maintain

safety standards and be compliant to

the rules to avert recurrence of such

He asked the garments owners to

The BGMEA leaders in their

decided to absorb all the KTS factory-

fire affected workers in other garments

at Kalurghat BSCIC Industrial Area

and provide them with financial assis-

tant alongside making arrangement

for payment of their salaries pending

first Vice-President Abu Tayyab

BGMEA leaders, Chittagong Fire Service Deputy Director Rashedul Islam Mazumder, International Affairs

Secretary of Bangladesh Sramik

League Safar Ali, and Shramik Dal

President of Chittagong unit Nazim

Uddin Chowdhury, among others,

At the function chaired by BGMEA

tragic incidents in future.

with KTS factory.

were present

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Bangladesh Garment Manufac-turers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) vesterday distributed cheques for Tk 79 thousand each to the five families of the burnt dead workers of KTS Textile and Garments where the country's worst-ever factory fire on February 23 left over fifty people killed and around

KTS FIRE IN CTG

take care of the workers' rights and one hundred injured. At a function at Agrabad BGMEA improve the owner-workers relation-Bhaban conference room in the ships for the greater interest of the afternoon, the chief guest Fisheries country. and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al February 26 meeting at Agrabad office Noman handed over the cheques.

The cheques for compensation were handed over to the five bereaved family members who appeared with sufficient proofs or evidence to claim it.

Families of deceased Khuki Akhter, Yasmin Begum, Amena Khatun Mohiuddin Rana and Sumi Akhter received the cheques

In addition to TK 79 thousand, Tk 21 thousand will be given to each deserving persons as per law through Labour Court, sources said. BGMEA will help the victims' family

members to get the rest of the money from the Labour Court, said BGMEA 1st

Vice President SMAbu Taher. Putting the official figures of the ournt dead workers of KTS at 56, the BGMEA leaders promised to pay

compensation of Tk 1 lakh for each of the other victims gradually. The BGMEA leaders asked the

Baghdad slaps

FROM PAGE 16 the most important prayer service of the week

Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari warned preachers not to incite hatred or violence in their sermons, threatening them with "severe measures."

"Our hope is that Friday sermons be sermons of unity," al-Jaafari said in a statement late Thursday. "The street is angry and they should know how to calm the people and reassure them that the government will do all it can to pass through this period."

Security forces sealed off Bachdad. preventing most vehicles from entering or eaving the city of 7 million, said Capt. Adil Mohan of the traffic police.

Armed police and soldiers in bulletproof vests manned checkpoints across the capital, preventing most cars and motorcycles from leaving their neighbourhoods.

Militiamen loval to radical Shia cleric Muotada al-Sadr were also out in force in the teeming Shia slum known as Sadr City, helping police check cars and patrol the area.

The collaboration was likely to raise alarm among Sunni Arabs, who accuse followers of the firebrand cleric of numerous attacks against them in recent days. US officials have also been pressing for the disbanding of private militias. Downtown was largely deserted.

alarmed not only Sunni Arabs and Kurds but also several key figures in the Shia alliance. Abdul-Mahdi was the candidate of Shia Alliance leader Abdul-Aziz al-Hakim, who often is at odds with al-Sadr.

But the alliance does not know how to esolve the problem without risking a huge fight with al-Sadr, who is revered

nong impoverished Shia militias. The move against al-Jaafari drew sharp opposition from al-Sadr.

"We will not abandon al-Jaafari," said a close aide to the firebrand Shia cleric. The aide spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the

Reda Jawad Taqi, an al-Hakim aide, said representatives of the largest parliamentary bloc would meet al-Jaafan opponents to "learn what is behind their position. We will not reject their demand (to meet). Everything is negotiable.

The Shias won 130 of Parliament's 275 seats in December elections, giving them the largest bloc of lawmakers and the first chance to form a government but

not enough to govern without partners. Also Thursday, gunmen attacked the disabled car of Irag's top Sunni politician, Adnan al-Dulaimi, killing one bodyguard

came out in the killings and attacks in Investigators hope the arrest of Jhalakathi, Chittagong and Gazipur," he said. Rahman is accused in 40 Rahman will lead to the revelation of a comprehensive picture of JMB includcharge sheets submitted by police so ing its network, fronts, operations and

Interrogators tight-lipped

"We think we can bring the highest conviction against him," the IGP said. Earlier on March 1, the man, who

terrorised Bangladesh with ruthless squads of bombers and boasted of suicide instead of surrendering, walked out of his Sylhet hideout into law enforcers' hands, ending 34 hours' suspense

in high security for interrogation at the Rab-1 office in Uttara after a Sylhet court remanded him for 10 days the

iks to organisations at home and

abroad

oughly," Rab intelligence chief Lt Col He was brought to Dhaka by road

"There's no doubt he holds the key to many important things. But we'll be able to say the exact extent of his usefulness in uncovering the mysteries only after interrogating him thor-

Gulzar Uddin Ahmed told The Daily Star earlier. Four members of Majlish-e-Shura, the seven-member highest tier of JMB. arrested so far have all named

JMB kingpin Wealth of ministers FROM PAGE 1

Abdul Hamid proposed formation of either a parliamentary body or a judicial commission to probe the wealth accumulated through corruption' by the family members of the incumbent prime minister as well as former premier Sheikh Hasina.

"The debate should be resolved by detecting whose family members actually grabbed public wealth

concerned to set up a five-or sevenmember independent and neutral Deputy Leader of the Opposition commission. Such commission, he said, must

have a high public standing and confidence to inquire into the matter and present a detailed report before the nation with recommendations. f necessary, the commission can seek assistance and cooperation from external experts and institutions.

He said when the question of national security is involved following the serial bombings by militant outfits, it should not be seen trivially or from petty partisan views. There are many instances in other countries where such independent commissions were constituted to get into the root of any serious national issue. Dr Kamal said it will not be wise to make a quick investigation into the case of Abdur Rahman and punish him after trial by a speedy tribunal. It must be seen how this man could build up such militant network in the last seven vears. what was his motive and who are with them. Another jurist Dr Zahir told ATN Bangla television that Interpol. Scotland Yard and FBI could be invited to investigate the case of Shaekh Rahman if the government wants to prove its sincerity that it really wants to root out extremism.

Hasına

opposition leader

people, she added.

dent observed.

FROM PAGE 16

drama on Bangla Bhai

Bush to talk

government had taken some mea-

sures against the militants in the

face of pressure from international

community as well as public, but

they repeatedly made drama in the

name of hunting down Shaekh Rahman and Bangla Bhai, said the

The way Rahman surrendered

Hasina said it was unbelievable

has aroused suspicion among the

how a man like Rahman stays with

his family members even after the

government had announced a

The recovery of books of Golam Azam and Moududi from the house

of Rahman proves the ruling coali-

tion partner Jamaat-e-Islami's links

with the militant outfit, the AL presi-

She said the people now wait for

what she said was the time when the

government would again stage a

slow-moving peace process since early 2004 aimed at settling their

nearly six-decade-old feud over the

Himalayan region of Kashmir, trigger of two of their three wars. The United States has been

pursuing a delicate balancing act in

seeking to boost relations with India

at the same time as preserving its

ties with Pakistan, a key ally in

Washington's "war on terror

bounty of Tk 50 lakh for his head.

FROM PAGE 1

Asked if Interpol's assistance will be sought to quiz Rahman, the IGP told the BBC that Rab and police have showed much success in comparison

ombudsman sector-wise but no step has been taken in this regard as yet. Transparency International has

mentioned they have formed the

Anti-Corruption Commission as per

their election pledge. The ruling BNP had also pledged

that an ombudsman would be

appointed within a short period. But

the government just passed a bill

last year for appointment of a tax

ombudsman. While passing the bill,

the government also said it would

make provisions for appointment of

branded Bangladesh as the most corrupt country in the world for the last four consecutive years and the country is still ill-equipped to combat graft.

Meanwhile, there are persisting allegations of corruption against lawmakers, ministers and even family members of the prime minis-

In the last parliament session both the BNP and the main opposition Awami League (AL) legislators traded blame of embezzling public wealth.

Even the prime minister and Opposition Leader Sheikh Hasina accused each other's family of grabbing public wealth through corruption

through corruption after assuming power," Hamid suggested. He also stressed investigating the wealth of other ministers and lawmakers they accumulated since 1971 to ascertain whether they are corrupt or not.

"The speaker can order formation of a parliamentary body or a judicial commission to find out the source of wealth of the prime minister and her family members as well

and her family members," he said. LGRD and Cooperatives

thing on Hamid's proposal. The speaker also did not

as that of the former prime minister

Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, who spoke later, did not say any-

respond to the deputy opposition leader's suggestion.

anchor at Kutubdia as they cannot approach the jetty or any other nearest point of anchorage due to draught problem.

But these lightering and demurrage costs and ocean loss can be avoided by setting up a single mooring system. For unloading crude oil, Bangladesh like any other importing countries must set up a 50 km-long 20-inch diameter oil pipeline in Kutubdia and outer anchorage up to oil mooring. Such a system would make unloading a fast and lossfree process, saving a huge cost.

"As Bangladesh will depend on petroleum import, it must optimise its import facilities to make it as cost-effective as possible. The higher authorities are aware of the importance of having a single mooring sea terminal but never

Though officials at the Directorate

acknowledged many of the state-

ments made by the teachers, they

denied that academic activities

across the polytechnics are being

severely hampered due to dearth of

number of teachers in the project-

based institutes should not be

viewed so negatively as the insti-

tutes have come into operation only

Those institutes have just had

the inaugural batch of students

enrolled and that is why they do not

need a large number of teachers

ever, said so far only one gualified

candidate has been found against

an advertisement for the positions of

principal in the 18 polytechnic

"The situation at the 20 old

government polytechnics will

improve considerably as the gov-

ernment will soon complete recruit-

ment to 225 posts of junior instructor

and instructor." said Abul Bashar,

director general of Technical

Of those posts, 110 junior

Many principals and vice-

principals in the conventional gov-

instructors have already been

recruited while 115 wait to be

Education Directorate.

appointed soon, he added.

The directorate officials, how-

right away, they argued.

The officials said the insufficient

FROM PAGE 16

teachers

recently.

institutes.

States, and is a pillar of the country's booming multi-billion dollar technology and outsourcing services industries

government figures.

The Press Trust of India news agency quoted Bush as acknowledging that people lose jobs as a result of globalisation.

Andhra Pradesh state supplies

nearly a quarter of the Indian tech-

nology professionals who work in

the United States, according to

After Bangalore. Hyderabad is

India's number two exporter of

software, mainly to the United

"Losing a job is painful. But the fundamental question is how does the government react," he told the students, adding that one way was to resort to protectionist laws and the other was to educate people so that they could find new

The president was scheduled to deliver a speech to political and business leaders late Friday at a 16th-century Mughal fort in New Delhi before departing for neighbouring Pakistan

huge vacuum to be filled, he noted.

pal and vice-principal in the project-

based institutes, Abul Bashar said

the government will soon place

advertisement for the second to fill

polytechnics are having difficulties

in terms of functions as other faculty

members have been immediately

tasked with carrying out the respon-

sibilities of the posts left vacant," he

BPTA has submitted a memoran-

dum to the prime minister and the

state minister for education of late,

demanding an urgent initiative to fill

the vacant posts in the public

polytechnics. In the memorandum,

they threatened to go for tougher

programmes in case of the govern-

ment not taking necessary mea-

Expressing concern over the

teacher crisis at the polytechnic

institutes, President of Institute of

Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh

Rafiqul Islam said, "Quantity as well

as quality of the diploma engineers

will come down alarmingly if such an

acute shortage of teachers per-

sures to this end.

sists.

"However, none of the public

the posts.

said.

About the vacant posts of princi-

version, the police said. A local teacher speaking anony mously said unknown people used to hold daylong meetings at the house. But neighbours were not invited and outsiders were not

allowed to take part. "Being a public representative, even I could not realise something fishy was going on here as they conducted their activities very secretly." said Mozammel Hug chairman of Ballamihar Union Parishad. Saidur Rahman claimed they

were conducting research work on the Quran with Allahr Dal leaders Matin Mehdi, Rafigul Islam and Rawnakul Islam Khushi.

Police are hunting for Rafiqul and Mehdi of Bridge Road of Gaibandha. The two launched the activities of Allahr Dal at Hashem Bazar three years ago and Mehdi 28 public polytechnics later joined the JMB.

A court in Jhenidah on February 28 sentenced 21 JMB militants including Allahr Dal leaders Mehdi and Abu Taleb Ansari alias Babul ernment polytechnics have gone Ansari to death in a bomb blast into retirement recently, creating a case.

Easy sailing FROM PAGE 1

addition to the overnight score. It was only the fifth ball of the morning and Shahriar Nafees took a sharp catch.

The home side's celebration did not last long as in-form Sangakkara joined opener Vandort to steady the innings. The pair cashed in quick runs and added 90 for the second wicket before southpaw Sangakkara offered a return catch to left-arm spinner Enamul Haque.

Captain Mahela Javawardene finished the chase in style as the right-hander executed a well-timed cover drive against Mohammad Ashraful to guide the side home in 37 overs. Jayawardene was not out with a 25-ball 26.

Ace Bangladesh batsman Ashraful, however, took the centre stage at the presentation ceremony when he was declared the man-ofthe-match for his heroic 136 in the first innings.

"I'm happy with this award but it could have been much better for me if I could contribute something in the second innings. I still believe that if we had put on 100 more runs on the board in the second innings, it would have been a different story altogether," said Ashraful.

Most shops and gas stations were closed, though small neighbourhood groceries stayed open. Dozens of young boys turned parts of Baghdad's usually busy Saadoun Street into improvised soccer fields, looking clearly unhappy when the odd cardisrupted their games.

Hundreds have been killed in the violence unleashed by the Feb. 22 bombing of a revered Shia shrine in the central city of Samarra and reprisal attacks against Sunni mosques. An extraordinary daytime curfew and vehicle restrictions last weekend helped curb the worst of the sectarian killing, but attacks continued this week

South of Baghdad, a mortar shell slammed into a market Friday in Mahmoudiya, killing one person and injuring another, police Capt. Rasheed al-Samaraie said. And police found two more handcuffed, blindfolded, bulletriddled bodies in Iskandariyah, said Capt. Muthana

The recent surge of violence has complicated negotiations for a new, broad-based government after December parliamentary elections. US officials consider an inclusive government essential if they are to start withdrawing troops before the end of the year.

Sunni Arabs walked out of the talks last week. accusing the Shia-led government and security forces of standing by as Sunni mosques were attacked. On Thursday, the main Sunni bloc joined Kurdish and secular parties in demanding that the dominant Shia alliance withdraw its nomination of al-Jaafari for another term as prime minister, threatening the country with new political turmoil.

Al-Jaafari won the nomination by a single vote during an election Feb. 12 among Shia lawmakers who won seats in the Dec. 15 parliamentary election. He defeated Vice President Adil Abdul-Mahdi in large part because of al-Sadr's support.

The idea of a prime minister who owes his position to the young radical has

Criminal killed FROM PAGE 16

town, at about 5:00am yesterday to recover the hidden firearms. When they reached nearby

Sreedharpur. Faruk's accomplices opened fire, forcing the law enforcers to retaliate.

Rab sources said Faruk was caught in 'crossfire' while trying to flee and died on the spot. Rab recovered one pistol and one shutter gun from the scene. pertonne.

and wounding five after al-Dulaimi sped away in another vehicle. It was not clear whether the assault was an assassination attempt, and the Sunni leader refused to blame anyone.

Urea plants

BCIC for the loss it incurs in selling urea at Tk 4.800 a tonne, which is Tk 1,200 less than production cost.

"The government pays fat bills to meet the price gap but it does not provide the subsidy money to BCIC With its ageing urea factories, BCIC is facing fund crisis for their maintenance," said Imaam-Uz Zaman. The factories are losing productivity operating year after year without oper maintenance, he added.

"No urea factory has been set up since 1990, when the biggest one in the country -- Jamuna Fertiliser Factory -- was built in Jamalpur. The first one -- Fenchuganj Fertiliser Factory --was set up 42 years ago."

The six urea factories produced 20 lakh tonnes last fiscal year, he said. "I doubt whether we'll be able to produce 18 lakh tonnes this year.' Jamuna factory has gone out of production for the third time in the st six months.

"We don't get money in time for overhauling the factories. All the factories are making losses. We're deprived of our subsidy bills. Government's subsidy allocation is entirely eaten up by imported urea, said the BCCI chairman. If things go on like this, local urea production

would dwindle further, he feared. When contacted, industries ministry sources said the proposed move for expansion of the joint venture Karnaphuli Fertiliser Company (Kafco) would result in an

increase in urea production but that would be of no significance for the country since it has to buy Kafco fertiliser at international market price.

Sources in the ministry and BCIC said the government has bought three lakh tonnes of urea from Kafco this fiscal year at a rate of Tk 18,000

Police seize items

FROM PAGE 1

He took a trade licence as coal and stone suppliers in the name of Chowdhury Enterprise' from the Sylhet City Corporation on February 14. In the licence, he had used the address of Purba Shaplabag under ward no 21 in the city corporation, although the rented house is under Tultikor Union, outside the city corporation area Besides, he did not mention the

house number in the licence. The city corporation issued the licence of Chowdhury Enterprise without mentioning its local address while Hridoy Chowdhury used his home address of Barisal.

Abdul Aziz Hanif, who surrendered with Shaekh Rahman, hails from village Bamia under Koira upazila of Khulna

As his name was mentioned in a number of vouchers found in the house, it is thought that Hanif was one of Shaekh's people who dealt with monetary matters.

The name of Opu was written on different pages while his travel and other expenditures were stated in details in a book titled 'Opu's account'.

It is suspected that he might have served as the cashier for keeping accounts of Shaekh's expenditure during his last days in Sylhet.

The name of Ramzanul Islam alias Dipu was found in a number of schoolbooks seized in the house. His father's name was mentioned as Tajul Islam of village Bhatfora under Mirzapore of Tangai

Dipu, a student of class seven in Syed Hatim Ali High School of Sylhet city, got himself admitted into

the school on January 28 this year, locals said

name was stated as KZ Hridoy Chowdhury, Modina market.

The matter has raised questions about his relation with Hridoy or even the Shaekh.

Thousands of curious people house yesterday.

FROM PAGE 1

press briefing at the State Department on Thursday.

He said Washington and Dhaka work closely together in the fight against terror. "This arrest is a sign of the fruits of that cooperation think

Ereli said both the countries have suffered at the hands of terrorists and 'we have a shared interest in continuing this cooperation.'

JMB patrons FROM PAGE 1

Atrai of Naogaon.

informed them of the developments.

In the admission form his father's

They were using fake names and identities for staying at Surya Dighal

went to see the police guarded

US State Dept

told a correspondent at a regular

Rahman along with Bangla Bhai

and his cadres went into hiding at the end of May after the government had ordered for their arrest. They left Rajshahi on June 24, 2004 when local police officials reportedly

sincere stance against militancy, they would not have expelled BNP MP Abu Hena for naming some ruling alliance leaders as patronis-After the 17 August blasts, the