EC sits today

sought Tk 12 crore again from the

yesterday they will seek more fund for printing of the updated voter list. The finance ministry earlier

In Netrokona, school students are allowed to apply for voting rights, and underage people have been engaged in updating the list in many places of the district, reports

Many assistant officers complained that some politicians compelled them to enrol underage

Two Class IX students-- Amena Khatun, 14, Ruhul Amin, 15-- at the Boali High School in Khaliaiuri

Preferring not to be named, two assistant officers told The Daily Star they enrolled those underage students under the pressure of a leading BNP leader of the Netrakona district. "We also enrolled many underage students as voters due to this influential BNP leader." said an assistant staff.

also reported in the Kalmakanda and Durgapur upazilas

Thirteen-year-old maidservant Sony Begum from Biswanathpur village, 15-year-old day labourer vear-old Ahamed Hossain, 15-vearold Kamal Ahamed from Ranikong village, and a class VIII student from Durgapur upazila got their way into the list under the pressure of local RNP leaders.

When contacted, assistant registration officers Humayan Kabir from Kalmakanda, Sajal Chandra Sarkar from Durgapur and Anwar Mahmud from Khaliajuri told this correspondent that they could not because of the political factor.

In many areas of Khagrachhari. some high school students got lucky, reports Our Correspondent.

Students Mrashang Marma, Ulapru Marma, Akroi Marma, and Nizam Uddin from Banghal Kathi of sadar upazilla were on those new underage voters.

Locals in Magura complained to Our Correspondent that enumerators were vet to visit some areas in

Ganga Rani Biswas, Parimal Biswas, Anita Rani Biswas, Sushanta Biswas and Sunita Rani Though EC officials claimed

yesterday they finished 90 percent job in Chittagong prospective voters in most of the city areas are still waiting for their visit, reports our

Living in a building only 50 yards away from the district EC office,

residents alleged that nobody came to their building as yet. Suman Das, owner of the four-storey building (house no-34/A) at the JM Sen Lane of the Jamal Khan Ward-21 said they are still waiting for assistant

Reports on the same slow-paced update was also received from Mymensingh and Jessore.

EC officials did not visit nearly hundred of villages as well as many areas of the Jessore sadar district till

The bulk of the update works in

Rajshahi is also yet to done. District election officer Sayed Musa Ahmed said about 2.23 lakh were enrolled as new voters till

France says US reservations over Lebanon

French President Jacques Chirac insisted Wednesday on an immediate ceasefire in Lebanon but admitted the United States had "reservations" over the wording of a UN resolution to end the conflict

Chirac, speaking after crisis talks with senior cabinet ministers, warned the Israel-Lebanon conflict was a threat to the stability of the

entire Middle East. "Faced with this crisis, which threatens the stability of an entire region, France is fully mobilised ... to secure a ceasefire and reach a durable settlement of this crisis.

Chirac told reporters. He voiced his confidence an agreement would be reached on a United Nations ceasefire resolution. though he admitted Paris and Washington -- co-sponsors of the draft text -- were divided over how

far to take on Lebanon's demands. "It seems indeed that there are American reservations towards adopting the proposal" integrating certain Lebanese demands, he

French and US diplomats were working Wednesday on a new draft resolution after Lebanon and Arab nations opposed an earlier text on the grounds that it did not call for Israel to withdraw its troops after a

"I cannot imagine that we fail to reach a solution, because that would mean we accept the situation as it is and renounce calls for an immediate ceasefire which would be the most immoral of solutions,

Chirac, who has close personal ties to Lebanon, describing the conflict as "a tragic succession of deaths, suffering and destruction... which each day brings new horrors.'

"Nothing will be solved by force." he added, stressing that a "political nent remai reaching a solution."

Bangladesh lose warm-up tie

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's preparation for the coming South Asian Games suffered a shock when they went down to Thailand Under-20 side in a warm-up match in Thailand yesterday.
The Bangladesh U-23 footballers

conceded a 75-minute goal in the match at Pattaya, according to a message received in Dhaka.

Bangladesh, who leave Bangkok for Colombo later tomorrow to take part in the 10th SA Games, will try to squeeze in another warm-up game in

Arrest warrants

fabricated and baseless statements

against him. The statements were published prominently in two national dailies --

the News Today and the daily Inqilab, he told the court. The Bol chief also alleged that the accused tamished his image and the image of the country as well, by providing false and defamatory statements to different national dailies.

The accused prominent citizens told journalists yesterday that they heard about the filing of the case against them but had yet to get any order or document in connection with it. They however decided to file a petition with the High Court this morning seeking anticipatory bail. Dr M Zahir, Mainul Husein, Mahmudul Islam, Rokanuddin Mahmud, Amirul Islam, Shahdeen Malik and Tanzibul-Alam will represent them as their

counsels in the court. "I know nothing," was the reaction of CPD Chairman Rehman Sobhan as he was asked about the case and arrest warrants. Rehman Sobhan and other prominent citizens were attending a consultation meeting of Nagorik Committee 2006, formed for preparing a vision paper for

Bangladesh in 2021 "I heard about it but have yet to get any order or paper," said Debapriya Bhattacharya. Asked about the next step of CPD, its executive director said, "Let us get the information

formally, then we will think about it." 'When I was coming to this meeting, I heard that a case was filed against me and a warrant of arrest was also issued." Laila Rahman Kabir told journalists while attending the consultation meeting in the

Cirdap auditorium. The Bol chief also alleged that the CPD board members while addressing the press conference on Tuesday termed him as a 'rajaker' (a collaborator with the invading Pakistani army during the War of Independence in

But, the CPD trustee board members categorically denied the allegation saying no such word was uttered by anyone in the press conference. " did not call him a collaborator,"

Manzur Elahi said. "What can I do if somebody files cases against me unnecessarily. Elahi said when asked about why Mahmudur had filed the case against him. "I don't know what crime I committed." he said.

Mahmudur Rahman while talking to some journalist in his office yesterday afternoon claimed that he had filed as the Bolichief

"I filed the case as a common citizen and the government has no relation with it," he was quoted as

He also said he will bear all the expenditure of the case himself and not with government money.

He said CPD Executive Director Debapriva Bhattacharya tarnished the image of the country and underestimated it, which is, according to him 'tantamount to sedition'.

The case was filed following a fiery debate between the Bol chief and CPD on the question of foreign investment flow into Bangladesh.
At the meeting with ERF
Mahmudur blasted CPD for 'trying to

portray a negative image of the country with a purposeful political CPD denied the allegation and brushed aside the remarks saving that it had collected the information from survey questionnaires and official statistics.

The remarks of the Bol executive chairman that CPD is a shameless liar and a conspirator, grossly violated the basic norms of public decorum and personal decency. We shall ignore all his crude and brash remarks on subjects beyond his competence as we feel embarrassed to discuss them" was the response of CPD executive director Debapriya Bhattacharya at Tuesday's news

260 more

FROM PAGE 1
East Airlines (MEA) will airlift the 260 Bangladeshis from Damascus airport. They are expected to arrive in Dhaka between 7:30am and

Quoting Bangladesh Ambassador to Jordan Golam Mohammad, the DGEP said the remaining Bangladeshis will be brought home "on confirmation of flights".

Last month, the first batch of 278 Bangladeshis was repatriated from Lebanon through Damascus in the wake of Israeli aggression against

Report on HC

FROM PAGE 1 down the prestige, dignity, integrity and high standing of the Supreme

By using some unexpected and unwarranted words in the news, the newspaper has shown disregards and disrespect to the dignity of the Supreme Court, he alleged.

This type of derogatory report against the Supreme Court is a contemptuous offence, the petitioner said.

Shock at case

have been filed are very respectable

persons and are not likely to hatch conspiracy. "I have heard the statements made at the CPD conference over television and read about it in newspapers, but I did not find anything defamatory, he said.

'It is very unfortunate that it went to such an extreme level," said Mir Nasir Hossain, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI).

He said differences of opinions handle such things carefully. He said the flow of investment to the compared to other countries.

and it is regrettable that the warrant of arrest had been issued against eminent citizens of high standing on the alleged defamation issue," said Latifur Rahman, president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI).

would disrupt free thinking," said Quazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad. president of the Bangladesh Economic Association.

The filing of the case was not a right action as any difference of opinion should be tackled with counter arguments. So the case should be withdrawn, he stated.

of power reflects a fascist mentality. said Abul Barakat, general secretary of the Bangladesh Economic Association.

Khondoker Ibrahim Khaled managing director of Pubali Bank said the case is a bad signal because it was filed against some

Wolfowitz and IMF Acting Managing

Director Takatoshi Kato made the

assurances in separate meetings

M Saifur Rahman in Washington on

take place early next month for the

release of the sixth tranche of

PRGF, according to a message

They stressed the importance of

continued support of the World

Bank in the form of DSCs and also

effective implementation of the

Country Assistance Strategy (CAS)

on which both the government and

the Bangladesh country team of the

"The bank will actively support

World Bank are now jointly working.

the government in implementing the

PRSP not only through release of

DSC-IV within the stipulated time,

but also through implementation of

projects with scaled up assistance

in the light of CAS," Wolfowitz was

quoted to have assured Saifur

ment for implementation of the

PRSP will continue beyond DSC-

IV." he further said, encouraging the

minister to continue the pace of

He gave special emphasis in

Wolfowitz acclaimed

Bangladesh's performance in social

areas vulnerable to external shocks

to sustain the hard-earned macro-

"Budget support to the govern-

received in Dhaka yesterday.

The fifth review on the PRGF will

with Finance and Planning Minister

Tuesday.

Rahman.

ment's own PRSP.

economic stability.

eminent persons The issuance of arrest warrant

against such persons is a threat to democracy, free thinking, civilization and as well as to the country itself, he said. Research director of the Bangladesh Institute of

Development Studies Zaid Bakht said: "I thought Rahman was an intelligent person but he showed callousness by filing a case against persons like Řehman Sobhan and Monzur Elahi who are highly respected in the society and also performed as members of the caretaker government. What understand by reading the statements made by both parties, the case should have been filed against Mahmudur."

4th Expert

FROM PAGE 16 separate goals

A 'steady state' population level reduced neo-natal mortality and maternal mortality, increased awareness of women's reproductive issues, universal access to worldclass primary healthcare, improved consumer awareness about food adulteration, universal access to safe water and sanitation and many other relevant issues will be deliber ated and consulted upon at today's

The outline of the Vision 2021 has been drafted on the basis of recommendations and aspirations propagated by a large number of people attending the regional civil society dialogues at various places of Bangladesh, which are being organised by CPD, the Prothom Alo,

The Daily Star and Channel i, The Nagorik Committee 2006 is now going through a process of consultation with expert groups about the draft outline.

IU students

appoint a new VC in his place. Meanwhile, teachers of the university under the banner of Islamic University Teachers Association (IUTA) brought out a procession yesterday on campus and reiterated that the Chancellor Prime Minister Khaleda Zia take immediate measures to appoint a new VC from among the teachers of the university.

The university authorities cancelled the Syndicate meeting scheduled to be held vesterday amid the unrest on campus, sources in the administration said

Earlier on Tuesday, the students locked up all departments and offices of the university and closed off the university main entrance blocking all traffic movement for four hours. The students vowed to continue

resolved, while different political students' organisations of the university extended their support to the movement initiated by the general students. The general student's agitation

came after 20 days of deadlock in

the university.

The deadlock was triggered by IUTA On July 19 in an urgent meeting - which declared suspension of classes and examinations and noncooperation programmes after the government appointed Prof Karim as the acting VC on July 18.

The previous VC Prof Rafigul Islam resigned on June 22 in wake of severe agitation by Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student wing of ruling BNP as he failed to appoint

at least 200 BNP loyalists. However, Prof Rafiq had appointed 162 BNP and Jamaat loyalists before his resignation.

Meanwhile, the recruitment by Prof Rafiq has been challenged by the High Court. Upon a write, a high court division bench on July 20 issued a rule on the IU authorities to explain within two weeks why the recruitment will not be declared illegal.

CPD protests

press conference held at the CPD auditorium in the capital. These newspapers wrote that CPD Board of Trustee Manzur Elahi termed Mahmudur Rahman as a 'Razakar or 'collaborator', a CPD press release said. "No such remarks were made in

the press conference. CPD is strongly protesting those news items," clarified the press release.

20,000 acres

FROM PAGE 16

parliamentary body.

"The grabbers are so powerful. They continue to grab land with the help of a section of government officials," Committee Chairman advocate Mahbubur Rahman told

reporters after the meeting.

Land worth Tk 60,000 crore to 70,000 crore have been illegally occupied across the country, he said expressing frustration over non-implementation of the committee's recommendations to recover

About the identity of the grabbers, the committee chairman said mainly businessmen industrialists and local elite are on the list.

Mahbubur said the secretary of the land ministry has promised to submit the list of the grabbers at the next meeting of the committee. "We will make the list public to let people know about them.

According to the district administration, 3,273 grabbers including housing companies have occupied 7,993 acres of land in Dhaka.

land while in Gazipur 13,934 encroachers have occupied 8,533

The committee chairman however said the actual amount of encroached land will be higher.

the present status of forestland. "A huge chunk of forest lands has been grabbed in Gazipur and Savar areas," the committee chairman

Waterlogging

FROM PAGE 1

wetlands as there will be no agriculture due to salinity in the water, he said, adding that fish production in the beels will also be less due to shortage of natural foods. He expressed fear that rise in

riverbeds caused by growing siltdistricts in 20 years.

waterlogged there will be no way to drain out the stagnant water from the areas, he said. Following construction of 37 polders and 282 sluice gates in the

tation in river channels started raising the riverbeds. Adjacent beels (wetlands) also subsided due to non-deposition of sediment, and a vast expanse of land gradually became permanently waterloaged.

Morshed conveyed the request for rescheduling the next summit at are now waterlogged while the the ninth ministerial of Bimstec in number of affected people is around 12 lakh, according to Water Committee, a local civil society forum campaigning for measures to solve the problem of persistent waterlogging.

logged.

Implement verdict

detect black money holders. The main task of the voters is not to elect such persons," he said. Dr Kamal, also president of the Gono Forum, said the EC has to start collecting information about

candidates in the next polls by

appointing manpower and training

them. Llawyers, accountants, media personnel and the civil society members can help it, he said. Expressing his desire to be the first to be a volunteer in the process and to provide information about he said the process requires mobilisation of the people Information about the candidates

should be made public to save the nation from the evil influence of black money holders, he noted. In his keynote presentation, Dr Badiul Alam Majumder said that on May 24 last year, the HC gave a 'revolutionary' verdict that directed their programme until the crisis is the EC to collect information about the candidates with their nomination papers and publicise those through

> the mass media. According to Section 111 of the constitution, any verdict of the HC is like a law and Section 112 provides that implementation of HC verdicts is mandatory, he said. "But unfortunately, our Election Commission has failed to implement the verdict

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Justice MA Aziz had remarked that implementation of the HC verdict is not mandatory since there is no provision of punishment in case of non-implementation of it.

Referring to this, Badiul, who is country director the Hunger Project, said, "HC verdict can be 'directory only in case of interpretation of law while all the other verdicts are mandatory.'

He called for foiling the 'conspiracy' against voters' right to information about candidates.

Moderating the roundtable, Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said the EC does not understand the HC verdict that results in its non-implementation before the elections. "It can be considered if any change in the legal

structure is needed in case of imple

menting the HC verdict." Reforms of the EC is a must, and the two major political parties have

to sit together to discuss the reform issues, he said. Supreme Court Bar Association President Barrister Amir Ul-Islam said democratic institutions are being destroyed through

politicisation The HC verdict on the voters' right to know about candidates is certainly mandatory but is not being

enforced, he noted Stressing empowerment of voters, Justice Abdur Rouf said politicians do not want laws that go

against their interests. Dr Tofael Ahmed of Chittagong University suggested that electoral rules should provide for programme where candidates will face questions from voters.

Dr Zafarullah Chowdhury of Gonoshasthya Kendra said a provision should be included in electoral rules that persons aged less than 18 cannot take part in election campaigns. "This (campaigning) leads them to crimes and drug addiction as they get money from political

Bangladesh Economic Association President Dr Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad stressed an integrated process to raise public awareness both in urban and rural

Speakers included former secretary Muzibul Haque, Major Generals (Rtd) Moinul Hussain Chowdhury and Syed Muhammad Ibrahim, Awami League (AL) leader Abdul Matin Khasru and Dr Asif Nazrul of Dhaka University.

The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam gave the welcome speech while Prothom Alo Joint Editor Abdul Qaium conducted

World oil prices FROM PAGE 16

September delivery jumped 50 cents to 78.05 dollars per barrel in electronic trading, not far from its all-time peak of 78.64 dollars reached on Monday. New York's main contract, light

sweet crude for delivery in September, climbed 29 cents to 76.60 dollars per barrel in electronic deals before the official opening of the US market. However the contract was a long

way off its historic record of 78.40 dollars per barrel reached in mid-July as violence erupted in Israel and Lebanon. "Crude futures gained ground this morning awaiting data that is

expected to show declining crude and

gasoline (petrol) inventories in the US," Sucden analyst Michael Davies said. "In addition, continued violence in the Middle East is still supporting oil prices with Israeli forces pushing deeper into southern Lebanon and

facing fierce resistance" from the Lebanese Hezbollah militia. The US Department of Energy was to publish its latest weekly snap shot of US energy inventories at 1430 GMT. According to analysts' consensus forecast, the data should reveal

that stockpiles of US crude and motor

fuel each dropped by one million barrels last week. "Figures above these predictions

may see the market revisit Monday's highs," Bank of Ireland analyst Paul Harris said. The price of Brent crude struck a historic high on Monday after British oil giant BP started shutting down

operations at Alaska's vast Prudhoe

Bay, the biggest oil field in the United States, after an ageing pipeline sprang a leak owing to unexpected A BP spokesman in London said Wednesday that the shutdown could be staggered to allow pipelines to continue pumping crude. The company has moved already to lock in

400,000 barrels per day of oil, or about 8.0 percent of total US oil production. "The story of oil at present remains one of threats to security of supply with accelerating global demand growth. Nigeria, Iran and the US Gulf hurricane season all... continuing to fuel prices, Harris

added Late on Tuesday, two Norwegians and two Ukrainians working on an oil supply vessel in Nigeria were kidnapped, the Norwegian government

Foreign Service. He was considered

close to Nehru-Gandhi family and

had served as minister of state for

science and technology under Rajiv

Gandhi and as external affairs minis

However, Pranab Mukheriee last

night said that the suspension was not

final and if Natwar's responded satis-

factorily to the show cause notice,

there would be no cause for further

ter in Manmohan Singh's ministry.

and the ship's operators said.

Congress suspends

FROM PAGE 16 midnight on Tuesday in a 90-minute meeting of Congress Party's Disciplinary Action Committee

The committee headed by party General Secretary AK Antony, also decided to issue Natwar a show cause notice asking him to explain why he should not be expelled from the party. Natwar has been given two

Briefing reporters after the Disciplinary Action Committee meeting, Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee, also a member of the committee, said the action against Natwar had been taken on two accounts.

First, Natwar as the leader of the Congress delegation to Iraq had expanded the list of delegates to include his son Jagat Singh and his cousin Andleeb Sehgal 'without recommendations from the party President Sonia Gandhi and even without her knowledge," Mukherjee

Secondly, Natwar had been indulging in and carrying out propaganda against Congress Party in the ast few weeks and brought disrepute

The suspension of Natwar thus snaps the 75-year-old diplomatturned-politician's 22-year-old association with Congress Party. He had

joined the party after quitting the

actions against him. But given Natwar's unbridled attack on the prime minister on Tuesday night, Congress sources expect nothing less than his expul-

action against Natwar from the issue of his privilege notice against the prime minister. Political observers said it was obvious that this added to the party's ire against the former minister. Although a number of Congress leaders had tried to broker peace

Congress however de-linked the

between party leadership and Natwar by persuading him to withdraw the privilege notice, his public assertion to prevent the prime minister from speaking in Rajya Sabha as retaliation to Congress' blocking him from speaking a few days back came as

Israel approves wider

More Hezbollah rockets were fired at northern Israeli towns-- including several medium-range missiles that landed near the West Bank town of Jenin and south of the Israeli city of

The Israeli army declined to

comment on reports about the 11 soldiers' deaths but said earlier that 15 soldiers were wounded in overnight clashes.

military struck Lebanon's largest Palestinian refugee camp, killing at least two people and wounding five Lebanese and Palestinian officials said an Israeli gunship shelled the Ein el-Hilweh camp, but Israel's military said the attack was an airstrike that targeted a house used

The camp is home to about

placed by the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. Israeli airstrikes also leveled a building in the Bekaa Valley town of

their descendants who were dis-

Also yesterday, Israeli warplanes dropped leaflets over Tyre again, and over Beirut proper for the first time. The flyers criticized Hezbollah leader Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, saying he was "playing with fire" and that the Lebanese people were "paying the price."

and the remaining two relatives were

group killed or wounded 10 Israeli soldiers vesterday and destroyed a tank as it advanced toward the village of Qantara, north of the Israeli border. The Israeli army said 15 soldiers were wounded in overnight clashes.

AL faces criticism

Rather, the senior AL leaders also expressed similar opinions to its allies that it was not right for the AL leaders to join the LCG, a platform of a number of donors, meeting where Jamaat leaders were pres-

leaders, who are not members of the 14-party liaison committee, joined the meeting following directives from the AL Chief Sheikh Hasina. As soon as Jalil said it was Hasina's direction. leaders of the AL's allies said they wanted to meet

Hasina and discuss the overal

strategy of the opposition combine.

The allies questioned how a 14party decision not to sit with Jamaat had changed. Sources said the 14-party LCG requesting them to attend the meeting. But 14-party senior leaders decided not to join the meeting

leader said they had even discussed about asking LCG to arrange a separate meeting for "But AL. violating the comthem

Nurul Islam, a senior leader of it was not right for AL to send its leaders to a meeting where Jamaat members were present. During the meeting, the leaders

slammed a number of opposition

leaders' criticism of Jatiya Party (JP

Chairman HM Ershad. They said such criticism would not bring any good to the party. They also decided that they would not speak ill of Ershad from now on so that Ershad does not go

The leaders also severely criticised a number of AL leaders who were assigned to deal with foreign affairs. The AL leaders designated with foreign affairs failed to perform their jobs properly, rather, the foreign mechanism misled them, they said in the meeting. They also nisms' misguiding.

Secretary Richard A Boucher's comments that Jamaat had no links with militant outfits and observed that the US lobby favoured the ruling

Meeting sources quoting Dilip Barua, senior opposition leader. said the government might make neighbouring India happy before the elections by bring back Tata's pro-The meeting also discussed on

14-party's next movement policy

BNP-Jamaat four-party coalition.

and decided to hold a grand rally in the capital early next month. The 14-party leaders will sit with Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina before August 13 to finalise unsettled issues including the party's election strategy, seat sharing, movement policies, and strategies over meetings with the donor agencies, said a senior opposition

leader.

march programmes at other districts and to mobilise a huge number of people in the movement for electoral reforms. They decided to hold demonstrations across the country including in

the capital on August 12 to protest

The meeting had detailed discussion on the road march

programme at district levels which

begins today at Bogra. The leaders

also decided to go for more road

the ongoing Israeli attacks on Briefing newsmen after the meeting, Jalil alleged that a vested quarter is hatching conspiracies to mislead people about the opposition's movement. He asked them to refrain from the politics of conspir-

He also reiterated that there would be no elections in Bangladesh until reforms in the caretaker government and in the Election Commission (EC) are implemented. Renewing their demand for the reconstruction of the EC to ensure free and fair polls in the country, Jalil said the updating of the voter list under this EC would not be acceptable.

Chaired by AL Presidium

Member Amir Hossain Amu, the

meeting was also attended by Abdur

Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjeet

Sengupta, Sheikh Fazlul Karim

Selim, Kazi Zafarullah, Obaidul

Quader, Rashed Khan Menon,

Hasanul Huq Inu, Bimal Biswas,

Samad, MA Gani, Asit Baron Roy

and Zakir Hossain

Mofidul Islam Khan Kamal, Abdus

Advocate AY Moshiuzzaman moved for the petitioner.

may occur but everybody should country increased but it might be low "It definitely comes as a surprise

"We condemn the case as it

'The arrogant behaviour of Mahmudur Rahman at the fag end

Barakat said Mahmudur should seek apology and withdraw the case.

WB, IMF to increase president of the country's sustained macroeconomic stability despite unfavourable external environment resulting from higher commodity price, particularly soaring oil prices.

He also informed about the

country's achievements in MDGs.

particularly in the social sectors, and

accelerated economic growth of about 7 percent last year. IMF Acting Managing Director Takatoshi Kato assured the finance minister of another round of PRGF agreement with Bangladesh after successful completion of the ongoing one by the end of this year.

He commended the improve-

ment in macroeconomic perfor-

mance, including sustained growth with moderate inflation, progress in meeting MDGs and robust growth in exports and remittances. Saifur apprised Kato of the measures taken to sustain the achievements already made and to accelerate domestic revenue mobi-

lisation that has recorded substan-

tial improvement over the last five

He, however, expressed concern risk to macroeconomic stability in all countries, and called for an effective IMF facility to help poor countries to absorb the shock.

Bangladesh Ambassador to

United States Shamsher M

Chowdhury and World Bank sector, economic growth and pov-Alternative Executive Director Zakir erty reduction in last five years at a Ahmed Khan were present at the rate highest in South Asia region. Saifur apprised the World Bank

Dhaka asks Bimstec

could come into force on July 1. "Clearly, we have missed the timeline. Given the current state of negotiations, my apprehension is that unless all member-countries demonstrate further flexibility and willingness to accommodate the concerns of all the member-states

to ensure equitable trade, we may

fail to see the larger canvass." he

Morshed said Bimstec, which brings together India, Bangladesh, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan, completes its first decade next year and the time has come to think of the road ahead for the regional grouping. "We need to ponder over the charter of our group. This would be a very useful instrument at disposal of

ples of our countries," he said add-"Our main objective in this regard should be to ensure effective According to the Morshed, the Bimstec countries should think of goals and targets in identified areas of cooperation and 'what is needed

is a result-oriented approach in

In this context, Morshed pro-

posed the Bimstec should review

different sectors'.

projects." he said.

the member-states to carry on

collaborative effort in a systematic

manner for the benefit of the peo-

the agenda of regional cooperation on a project-based mode and think of an alternative to realise concrete sectoral projects. "We need to review how far we have benefited from project-based approach to cooperation and whether we could think of any other

way to realise concrete sectoral

so far been inter-governmental in

nature but 'we really need to con-

sider how best we could utilise the

strength of a dynamic and innova-

He said Bimstec's activities have

tive civil society that exist in our countries' to promote regional cooperation. "By civil societies, I mean a range of stake-holders like think tanks, private sector entrepreneurs, businesses, NGOs," he said adding

"We should seriously consider how best they could be involved with the inter-governmental process to facilitate regional cooperation."

Calling for broadening people-to-

people contact among Bimstec

countries, Morshed suggested

more measures like easier movement of professionals, private sector representatives as well as people. He also proposed involvement of non-member states with Bimstec and pointed out that during Bangladesh's chairmanship of the grouping, Bangladesh Institute of Strategic Studies had organised a forum with leading Japanese think

tank Sasakawa Foundation on

possible collaboration between

Bimstec and Japan. "Whatever the form, we collectively need to decide on involvement of non-member states. We need to recognise their growing interest on involving themselves with Bimstec. This could usher in a new era for our organisation. We need to look at developing guidelines for such engagement," Morshed said.

He said the challenge before

Bimstec is not only to discuss its

potentials but also to focus on

initiating actions for 'actualising the

immense prospect of regional cooperation RESCHEDULING BIMSTEC **SUMMIT** Bangladesh suggested rescheduling of the second Bimstec summit, scheduled for February 2007, due to

New Delhi vesterday, sources said. They however added that no decision was taken on Dhaka's request. The general elections are expected sometime early next year. The first Bimstec summit was held in

Thailand in July 2004.

the upcoming parliamentary polls.

In Narayanganj, 13,745 grab-bers have gobbled up 4,207 acres of

The committee also discussed

meni, katle, khailsha and taki have become extinct, Dipok Kamal, a professor of fisheries and marine resource technology of the KU, said. He said the people in the area will now be dependent on fishing in the

ation and sea level rise will result in waterlogging in almost all areas of Khulna, Jessore and Satkhira Worse still, once the area is

three districts in mid 60s, sedimen-Some two lakh hectares of land

Around 80,000 hectares of land of the said area are badly water-

weeks to reply.

Afula-- bringing the total during the conflict to 3,333, police said. By mid-afternoon, the guerrillas had fired 132 rockets, but no casualties were immediately reported, said police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld.

In Israeli attacks vesterday, the

by Hezbollah querrillas. 75,000 Palestinian refugees and

Mashghara, trapping seven people from the same family under the rubble. Five bodies were pulled out

feared dead, officials said.

A Hezbollah statement said the

finance ministry Tuesday. The EC secretary also hinted allocated Tk 25 crore against the officials to come to their doors.

demand of Tk 40.86 crore.

Our Correspondent. students as voters.

upazila were drafted in as voters.

Similar illegal enrolments were

Rasiduddin from Karnai village, 14-

update the voter list properly many eligible indigenous people were not made voters although

the municipality Some locals also alleged a good number of people who moved to India in 2001 were enlisted as voters again. Some of them are Rabindranath Biswas, Joyoshree Biswas, Sattendranath Biswas,

Chittagong office.

Meeting sources said the AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil told the meeting that a group of AL

received an invitation letter from the as Jamaat leaders would be present Talking to The Daily Star a senior

bine's decision and stance against Jamaat, joined the meeting," he said preferring not to be named. the 14-party, told The Daily Star that

against the opposition combine in the upcoming parliamentary elec-

observed that anti-government movements had not taken shape properly due to the foreign mecha-They criticised US Assistant

resolution