An inter-ministerial meeting to review the proposed national energy policy yesterday decided to give emphasis on the use of gas in economically viable sectors like manufacture of petrochemical products and Urea, reports UNB.

The high level meeting held at the cabinet room of the secretariat with Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman in the chair also decided to explore alternative source of gas for domestic consumption as well as generation of electricity.

it reviewed various aspects of the national energy policy and brought some amendments to the proposed energy policy, said an official handout. In view of the acute energy

shortage and ever increasing pressure on the country's known recoverable gas reserve, it stressed the need for proper and optimum utilisation of gas resource.

The meeting also laid emphasis on more participation of the private sector in exploration, extraction, development and utilisation of gas.

The country's proven recoverable gas reserve was estimated at 10.44 trillion cubic feet (TCF) on June 1993 in 8 gas fields which are in operation. So far 17 gas fields have

Chief of the Air Staff Air

Vice-Marshal Altaf Hossain

Choudhury received him at the

Zia International Airport

Principal staff officers and

other senior BAF officers were

members of his delegation vis-

ited the 'Shikha Anirban' — the

eternal flame — at the Dhaka

cantonment and placed wreath

at the memorial to pay homage

to the valiant members of the

Armed Forces who had em-

War of Liberation in 1971.

braced martyrdom during the

to the Air Headquarters where

he called on the Chief of Air

Staff, Air Vice-Marshal Altaf

Hossain Choudhury. General

Aziz stayed with Air Vice-Mar-

The RMAF chief then went

The RMAF chief and the

also present at the airport.

been discovered in the coun-

The reserve is likely to be exhausted within the next 25

"We have to be very careful in selecting areas where gas resource should be utilised." said Finance Minister Saifur Rahman. He told the meeting that necessary funds would be mobilised for exploration of

new gas field on priority basis. The government will also keep its option open to exnation. plore the possibility of using coal in electricity generation if it is found to be economi-

Ctg div BNP confce postponed

cally and commercially viable.

Chittagong divisional councillors' conference of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) scheduled to be held on March 23 has been postponed, according to a party press release yesterday, reports BSS.

In a statement, organising secretary and coordinator secretary of Chittagong divisional councillors conference Haris Chowdhury said next date for . the conference will be announced very soon.

Malaysian air From Page One

chief in city Chief of Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) Lieutenant General Dato Seri Abdul Ghani Aziz arrived in the city yesterday on a three-day goodwill visit to Bangladesh leading a threemember delegation, reports price hike has continued.

Meanwhile, chicken supply from the northern areas of the country continued to fall and the price is fluctuating by Tk 20-50 per piece in the city.

Small size chicken sells at Tk 75 per piece, a medium size weighing around one kg at Tk 100 and a large size weigh-

do not show any downward

The prices of atta and flour

Rice price

hovered between Tk 8 and 10 for over three years till August-September 1994 and started to go up ever since. Although the government in its effort to stabilize rice price introduced an Open Market Sale (OMS) programme from January, the

ing 1.5 kg or so at Tk 150.

Mutton was selling at Tk 110 to 120 while beef jumped up to Tk 80 from Tk 60 at different city markets. The prices of most two-kilo powder milk cans have gone up by Tk 20 to 30 before the Eld. The prices trend, traders told The Daily

which were around Tk 10 to 12 a few months back also went up to Tk 13 and 14 re-

shal Choudhury for some time Reinsurance company

From Page One

pelled by law to place 50 per cent of the reinsurance business with the state-owned SBC, which is also a competi-

"In fact we are placing 100 per cent (of the reinsurance) with Sadharan Bima Corporation because with the balance 50 per cent we cannot approach individually, being very small," Islam, who is also chairman of the United Insurance Company, added. "This is an uncommon situation which is not prevalent in any country

of the world." The proposed reinsurance company could be a joint venture organisation with both public and private sector capital, he said, "If such a reinsurance organisation is created, it can act dispassionately and professionally to give service not only to the insurance companies in the private and public sector at home but also can attract reinsurance business

from abroad." Therefore, it is high time that the government immediately take out the reinsurance function from the SBC and place it with a joint venture reinsurance company by amending the existing law, Is-

lam added.

The press conference was attended by, among others, Shamsul Alam, Managing Director of Reliance Insurance; MA Samad, Chairman and Managing Director of BGIC: Nasir A Choudhury, Managing Director of Green Delta Insurance; Rafigul Islam, Managing Director of Pragati Insurance; Rezaul Karim, Managing Director of Janata Insurance; Maj Gen (retd) Mannan Siddiqui, Chairman of Phoenic Insurance; Haider Choudhury, Chairman of Eastern Insurance, and Dr Nazrul Islam, Chairman of Federal Insurance.

The BIA also called for reducing the tax rate for insurance companies from the present 50 per cent, more in line with the corporate tax rate for non-financial institutions at 37.5 per cent for publicly listed companies and 42.5 per cent for those not listed.

"We strongly urge the government for a fair treatment. High rate of taxes does not allow keeping sufficient 'reserve' for catastrophic losses which is so vital for an insurance company," Islam said, adding that a reduction would also in-

crease investable funds. He also called for with drawal of the system of taking income tax at source of insur ance agents saying that it is adversely affecting the life in surance business.

The association urged the government to rationalise the value added tax and stamp duty relating to the insurance business and also called for the withdrawal of restrictions of private companies as regards insuring public sector concerns, which is presently left

exclusively for the SBC. "This is not fair and it does not go along with the free market economic policies being presently persued," Islam said, while demanding that the government definition of 'public property' be changed and all business is made free for competition.

The BIA Chairman maintained that all project insurance should be underwritten by the local insurance companies and also sought withdrawal of the system of enlistment of insurance companies by the banks and financial institutions.

The association also reacted strongly against allowing any foreign insurance company to open branches in the country We strongly oppose allowing branch offices of foreign insurance companies in the country, but they can come up with joint ventures or collaboration with local companies," Islam

The country has 16 general insurance companies and four life insurance firms in the private sector.

Of the total general insurance premium of Tk 280 crore last year, private insurance companies transacted 80 per

In the life insurance sector. private companies got Tk 28 crore in new businesses in 1993 as against Tk 15 crore by the state-run Jiban Bima Corporation.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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Bangabandhu

From Page One pledge to foil all sorts of conspiracy, establish the fundamental and democratic rights of the people and build an exploitation-free society as dreamt by the Bangabandhu." she said.

Hasina said, the Bangabandhu at a crucial juncture of history united the Bangalee nation during the war of Independence that resulted in the emergence of sovereign Bangladesh.

She also gave a brief resume of the life of Bangabandhu and said. Sheikh Mujib was always uncompromising on the fight for the rights of the Bangalee

As part of the programme, the birth day celebration committee under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina will place wreaths at the mazar of Bangabandhu at Tungipara at 9 am today.

Sheikh Hasina left Dhaka yesterday for Tungipara where she will open a two-day programme through a rally of juveniles and children at 9:30

A milad mahfil will be organised at 10 am and a discussion meeting at 3 pm. The programme of the day will be rounded off with a cultural

A competition on extempore speeches of children and juveniles will be held at 10 am tomorrow. Sheikh Hasina will distribute prizes among the

There will be poetry recitation at 3 pm and a cultural soiree and drama at 5 pm and 7:30 pm respectively.

In Dhaka, the day's programme includes hoisting of national and party flags atop the AL central office and the Bangabandhu Bhaban.

The AL leaders and workers will assemble at the Bangabandhu Bhaban at 8 am and place wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu. A milad mahfil will also be

held in the city seeking salvation of the departed souls of Bangabandhu, his family members and those who were killed along with him on August 15, 1975. The Bangabandhu Parishad

will arrange an exhibition of paintings at 3 pm at the premises of Bangabandhu Bhaban and a gathering of children and juveniles at 3:30 pm. Prof Mamtazuddin Ahmed.

Golam Akbar Chowdhury, Ma-hadev Saha and Nima Rahman will speak on the Liberation War. Sufia Kamal will be in the chair.

The Bangladesh Chhatra League (S-P) will lay wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu in the morning at the Bangabandhu Bhaban and bring out a procession and hold a rally on the Dhaka University Campus.

Zillur Rahman, general secretary of the AL has urged all party units to observe the day in a belitting manner.

2 die, 4 hurt in city incidents

By Staff Correspondent

Two persons were killed and four others injured in two separate incidents in the city resterday.

Sources said an unknown male, aged about 30, died when a speedy truck hit a tempo in Mirpur-2 at about

Of the four injured, all passengers of the tempo. Two were identified as Abdul Majed, 35, Mujibur Rahman,

In another incident, one Kuddus died when a part of boring machine fell on him at a housing project in East Rampura in the afternoon.

Meanwhile, some unidentifled persons stabbed a guard of a house in New Baily Road

yesterday. According to sources, guard Zahangir Alam, 26, tried to resist a group of about 20 persons when they tried to enter the house.

From Page One

several thousand agitating

farmers allegedly looted 200

bags of fertiliser during the

Awami League-sponsored thana

gherao programme at Kazipur

ged the thana headquarters

responding to the Awami

League call for gherao to

protest the price spiral of fer-

gramme the agitating farmers

looted a fertiliser truck head-

ing towards the thana for dis-

tribution among the farmers at

to disperse them, leaving at

least 15 people injured. A po-

liceman was also injured dur-

admitted to Kazipur Health

from district headquarters

rushed to the scene and

brought the situation under

control. They also recovered

eight bags of fertiliser and ar-

rested five people, including a

UP member, from the spot.

Two of the injured were

Later, a contingent of police

Police lathicharged the mob

Police said during the pro-

About 5,000 people thron-

yesterday.

fair price.

ing the clash.

Complex.

tiliser and rice.

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina among child artistes at

the Shilpakala Academy in the city yesterday. People's

Theatre Association organised the first-ever Children's

Drama Festival which Hasina inaugurated. — Star photo

"AL struggling to ensure

safe future for children"

ladesh.

ulty of the children.

The AL chief said. "We have

a glorious tradition and rich

history. Children should be ac-

quainted with the true history

and tradition of the nation to

build up a prosperous Bang-

She, however, said that pro-

per environment to flourish

the intellect of the children is

not present in the country.

The children here are ne-

glected and the government

failed to ensure the minimum

needs of maximum children.

People's Theatre Associa-

tion organised the week-long

festival being participated by

some 20 drama groups of chil-

dren at the Shilpakala Acade-

director of the opinion survey project Dr. Qazi Kholiquzzaman Alimad presented the draft report of the survey at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday afternoon.

From Page One

Awami League President

Sheikh Hasina vesterday said

her party is struggling to en-

sure a safe and secure future

for the children, reports UNB.

into darkness. There is no se-

curity of life, there is no peace.

Clash, conflict and killings are

taking place everywhere," she

said while inaugurating the

First National Children Drama

Festival at Shilpakala Academy.

erful medium to make people

conscious about their rights.

education, health and other

important issues. "Drama is

more effective than speech to

motivate the people." she

She said cultural activities

are not less important than

tormal education. They can

shelp develop the mental fac-

Hasina said drama is a pow-

"The nation has plunged

Thirty-five point two per cent respondents viewed that holding national elections, before the expiry of the term of the present Parliament, by handing over power to a carelaker government could resolve the political crisis.

Forty-one point five per cent of the respondents held the ruling BNP while 25 per cent held the Awami League responsible for the present

Meanwhile, 59 per cent said the resignation of opposition MPs was not a proper step while 52.9 per cent felt that the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament should have met and worked out a solution.

The survey conducted during January and February was based on a nationwide sample of 1,862 respondents drawn from the voting-age people in urban and rural areas. Twentyeight per cent urban and 72 per cent rural sub samples were allocated to 60 districts

Meanwhile, farmers cla-

Police said the clash ensued

District Awami League

In another development

shed with fertiliser traders in

Kamarkhand Thana yesterday

leaving at least 5 people in-

when the traders charged Tk

500 per bag of urea at

town protesting the police ac-

thousands of farmers in five

thanas of Sherpur district

demonstrated in front of DC

and TNO offices yesterday de-

manding fertiliser at fair price.

district has taken a serious

turn with cultivation in about

51,716 hectares of land facing

odds due to short supply of

fertiliser", said an official of

the Agriculture Extension

Department who preferred not

Deputy Commissioner Ma-

tiur Rahman said the district

administration had received

only 466 metric tons of

fertiliser as against its demand

of about 6,150 tonnes.

to be named.

"The fertiliser crisis in the

Bhadraghat Bazar.

Copenhagen summit in proportion to population.

Social, political, economic and religious issues were included in the survey in which the respondents comprised men and women from various professions such as service holders, teachers, business people. politicians, lawyers, doctors, engineers, housewives, industrial labourers, day labourers, students, farmers

and agricultural labourers. In the survey, majority of the respondents said that there was no difference between the present government and the past autocratic government as regards the use of

the electronic media. Meanwhile, 66.6 per cent felt that private radio and television channels would be neu tral. Besides, 80.3 per cent respondents felt that the electronic media in the country were not enjoying freedom while 45 per cent had no con-

fidence in this media. Dr Kholiquzzaman said more surveys would be conducted on other important press national issues from time to time.

The press conference was also attended by Prof Abdur Rashid Chowdhury, Nilufar Banu and Shamsul Alam.

Ctg Urea Factory stops production he noted.

Extending support to the agitational profarmers' grammes district Awami League also held a rally in front of the DC office. It was ad-

Azharul Hague Helal. The District Awami League also called a half-day hartal in the district today to protest brought out a procession in the the 'artificial fertiliser crisis.'

dressed by Advocate Abdus

Samad, Mozammel Haque and

A large number of farmers brought out processions in the town and laid a siege to Deputy Commissioner's office from 10 am to 4 pm demanding fertiliser at fair price. The protesters chased a local BNP leader and fertiliser dealer. Saiful Islam.

The agitating farmers also brought out processions and held rallies at Nalitabari. Nakla, Sribardi and Jhenigati thanas.

They attacked a fertiliser godown at Nalitabari. Five farmers were injured in the melee.

The Awami League also held a rally at Nalitabari. Central leader of the party Matia Chowdhury addressed the rally.

Finance Ministry contradicts Hasina's comments

The Ministry of Finance has contradicted comments made by the Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina, regarding the executive committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) at a press conference which was published in different dailies on March 14, reports BSS.

The Finance Ministry, in its statement issued yesterday, termed the comment of Sheikh Hasina as "unwanted, regrettable and defamatory" as "she passed some generalised comments regarding the institution without bringing any specific charges".

The ministry in its statement said that the ECNEC is comprised of one minister seven members from the cabinet committee on government purchase and eight members from the cabinet committee on finance and matters relating to financial affairs.

Outlining the general practice of the ECNEC. the statement said that usually those proposals of development projects having financial involvement over certain ceiling and having been recommended by the committees of different ministries and various levels of the Planning Commission, are placed before the ECNEC for consideration and approval.

The committee, through unanimous consent of all members, takes the decision on the investment projects on the basis of specific guidelines and after proper consideration of the recommendations of various ministries and the Planning Commission.

Under such circumstances it is clear, the statement said that Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina is not well aware of the system of taking decision and the working process of those committees "Making sweeping comment without bringing any specific allegation by the Awami League leader against these institutions is unwanted, deplorable and defamatory, the statement added.

Opinion poll

From Page One The Social Summit was an occasion when all the leaders who went there became more aware of some of the most pressing social and economic problems.

Apart from the new moral ethics set by the Copenhagen Summit or the discussion on issues that had never been addressed by a UN conference before, the only tangible benethat Hangladesh derives perhaps was the debt relief, Bangladeshi summiteers said.

After tough negotiations. the developed countries finally agreed to write off bilateral debt of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and some of the African states

The other gain for Bangladesh was achieving mational treatment' for its documented migrant workers

"This means that the Bangladeshis who are working abroad will enjoy equal social rights as a national," explained Dr M Afsarul Qader, Director General of the UN desk in the Foreign Ministry.

NGO representatives at the Social Summit, however, were cautious while commenting on what we gained from the Summit.

The outcome would depend on the policy of the government as well as the atmosphere that enables the NGOs to work in the country, they

What we gained from this conference is, perhaps, that for the first time people were placed at the centre of global attention," said Zahin Ahmed a member of the NGO Preparatory Committee for Social Summit. For the first time, the centrality of people was recognised by the world and social equity and environmental concerns were re-emphasised,

The Copenhagen conference was an intellectual and moral breakthrough and furnished food for future thoughts for the world, he said, adding "The question is how fast can we recognise these challenges and implement the commitments in our country."

HR bodies, NGOs to monitor Tongi model polls

By Staff Correspondent

A coordination meeting o different human rights organisations and NGOs involved in monitoring the elections to the Jatiya Sangsad was held yesterday at the office of the Coordinating Council for Human Rights in Bangladesh (CCHRB). Presided over by CCHRB

Chairman Shafiqul Huq Chowdhury, the meeting decided to monitor the next month's model polls of Tongi Municipality and formed an advisory committee to monitor the sixth national parliament election.

The Midnight Eile

Rabbani refuses to fix date for quitting

ISLAMABAD, Mar 16: Afghanistan's President Burhanuddin Rabbani said today he would not be bound by a United Nations peace plan that calls for him to quit March 21. "We support the UN peace formula," Rabbani told a news conference in neighbouring Pakistan. But, he added, "I'm waiting for a reliable mechanism before I transfer power," reports AP.

Kerala chief minister quits

NEW DELHI. Mar 16: The highest elected official of a faction-ridden party governing a southern state quit Thursday after a coalition member threatened to pull out of the government. Kerala state Chief Minister K Karunakaran's resignation was widely expected. He is likely to be replaced by a moderate politician from his Congress Party. Karunakaran announced his resignation at a public raily, a day before he was scheduled to present the state budget in the legislature. reports AP

Gen Manzur murder

evidence of the more than a decade old case of Major General Manzur's alleged murder, sources close to the investigators said

made by Maj (retd) Kazi Emdadul Huq, the sole accused named in the FIR, remains the main basis of the investigations although the CID officials are also searching for some other vital documents sources said.

A special team which recently visited the port city could unearth scanty evidence. Meanwhile, police were yet to recover the dossier on the

4 killed in separate incidents in Ctg

persons were killed in separate incidents today. Police say, angry villagers beat to death two persons suspecting them dacoits at Mir-

Police recovered a beheaded body from Mirersharai

Patiya when he run over by a tank-lorry carrying petroleum Raozan police recovered a

Binajuri village last night. But none was arrested in this connection.

Dini wins vote ·

The vote was 315-309, giv ing Dini victory in a test of strength against former

incident

By Staff Correspondent

The Greater Chittagong Hill Tracts Hill Students' Council (GCHTHSC) yesterday brought out a procession in the capital to protest Wednesday's attack on the hill people by miscreants at Bandarban.

committee of the GCHTHSC. the procession started from the road island near TSC of the Dhaka University and paraded towards the Jatiya Press Club before being blocked by police near the Institution of Engi-

case relating to President Ziaur Rahman's assassination on May 30, 1981. The then Asstt Commissioner of Kotwali thana, Chittagong Abdul Hakim Khan, who was the investigat ing officer and is now posted in Dhaka. may be summoned to. help locate the documents.

Gen Manzur died in Army custody on the night of June 1981 following an abortive coup and was buried at th Cantonment gravevard, Sour ces in Chittagong said his grave had been kept under surveillance for a long time. But one source in Dhaka

said the CID officials are trying to establish how the order for handing Manzur over to the Army through Capt Emdad was issued and by whom. Two other detained former

soldiers - Maj Gen (retd) Abdul Latif and Lt Col (Retd) Shamsur Rahman — are now in the CID's remand for interrogation. Their placement on a five-

day remand expires today and court sources hinted that the two might be produced before a special magistrate's court today for recording their statements under Section 164 of the CrPC. Another source said. the court inspector may pray for extension of the remand.

PM at reception

From Page One keep up its economic ad-

vancement The Prime Minister said those foreigners who had once dubbed Bangladesh as a basket case, are now themselves calling Bangladesh an emerging

The image of the country. she said, today has brightened

worldwide. Giving a brief resume of country's overall advancement in various sectors and the measures undertaken by her government, the Prime Minister said massive uplift programmes have been launched across the country for improving different socio-economic

tions and power. Listing the measures undertaken in the field of education. Begum Zia said as a result, the rate of school attendance increased significantly as well as the rate of school

sectors including communica-

drop-out reduced greatly. The Prime Minister also mentioned that her govern ment has also been implementing massive programmes emphasising the development of the neglected Sylhet and northern part of the country.

Presided over by BNP UK unit president Mahidur Rahman, the reception was also addressed by Rosy Kabir MP. and Bangladesh High Commissioner in UK Dr AFM Yusuf. BNP UK unit general secretary M A Malik, east London unit BNP president Sadiq Mia greater London unit BNP president Mahtab Chowdhury and Shamsul Alam were also pre-

48-hr workers' strike

others.

ence.

jute-textile-yarn sector trade unions' alliance programme at their office near the SKOP's.

At both the press conferences, the speakers reiterated their allegations that the government violated its accords signed with the labour bodies in different sectors on several occasions including one on 6 July 1992. Furthermore, this government, instead of giving fresh benefits, had curtailed some of those the workers

The labour leaders further alleged that the government. despite agreeing in principle to implement the National Wages Commission award in the private enterprises, had later stopped it by issuing a circular just to protect the in-

The government had not yet taken any effective mea sures, as provided by the 1992 pact, to reopen some 5,000 industrial units closed due to the wrong policy pursued by the present government, they said adding many others were

Besides, they said, although

the accord it did not accept the recommendations made unanimously by the commission members and gave suggestions which were not acceptable to them.

The trade union leaders also accused the government of unleashing terrorism in the industrial belts and creating a crisis there by acting as per the World Bank-IMF directives

Besides, they alleged, in stead of resolving the crisis in the industrial and other sectors, the authorities had rather complicated the situation by resorting to repression on the agitating workers, killing at least 17 and injuring many

The SKOP press conference was attended by among others. Abdus Salam Khan Abdullah Sarkar, Dr. Wajedul, Islam Khan, Iskandar Ali. Nazrul Islam Khan, Protabuddin Ahmed, Shafigur Rahman Majumder, lqbal Majumder, Shirin Akhter, Khandakar Fazlul Haq. Mesbahuddin Ahmed and Abdul Kader. Lutfar Rahman, Shah Alam, ZM Quamrul Anam, K Alam Lablu, Shahidul lah Choudhury, Anwara Begum, Belayet Hossain and Badre Alam Khan among those were present at the jute-textile sector workers press confer-

From Page One

A confessional statement

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Mar 16: Four

early this morning. The dead were identified as Mozammel Hoque and Abul Bashar.

erkil under Hathazari thana

this morning. The body that also carried marks of stab injuries could not be identified. Another unidentified person, aged 25, was killed at

Pakistan made gun, an LG and a pipegun during a raid at

of confidence

ROME, Mar 16: Premier Lamberto Dini narrowly won a vote of confidence in Parliament today staving off the collapse of his two-month-old

government, reports AP. Prenner Silvio Berlusconi.

Hill students protest CHT

Organised by the central

From Page One

while Abul Bashar declared the

used to enjoy

terests of the owners.

awaiting shutdown.

the government had formed a Law Commission to formulate democratic labour laws as per