Privatisation, role of bureaucrats blamed

Prokrichi on tood, fertiliser crisis

By Staff Correspondent

The donors-sponsored privatisation in the agriculture sector and the role of bureaucrats in this regard have helped create a 'food and fertiliser crisis' in the country.

This was said by the Prokriehi-BCS Action Committee, representing engineers, agriculturists, doctors and 26 other cadres of professionals employed in the government service.

"We think that a greater national initiative is needed to face the food crisis and tackle the situation in agriculture sector." president of the committee Dr M A Majed told a press conference yesterday.

He said professionals, particularly agriculturists, engineers, economists and social scientists could suggest ways and means to overcome the crisis and make efforts for their implementation.

"It is a fact that handing over of fertiliser distribution from Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) to private traders resulted in a severe crisis in the

The irrigation and fertiliser distribution systems of the BADC were "suspended on the plea of free market economy, as conspired by the bureaucrats", Majed alleged and also blamed the government for 'politicisation' of the bureau-

The BADC had built up a countrywide network for distribution of fertiliser and providing irrigation facilities, he pointed out. But due to suspension of many of its operations, around 5 lakh hectares of land were deprived of irrigation facilities since 1991-92. he said.

Majed blamed the government for not utilising the huge infrastructure of the BADC when a drought affected the production of aman paddy last year. The fertiliser distribution petwork of the BADC also re-

From Page One

1981 he, along with a 13-

Hathazari in three army vehi-

ment he reported to the office

of the Brig Aziz who, Emdad

said, had been staying at his

police station. Emdad told the

police officials that he had

been sent to take the arrested

persons including Gen Manzur.

After verifying the identity of

Emdad the police officials con-

tacted Brig Aziz and Brig Latif

to cross check the message he

was carrying. The then DIG,

Chittagong Range, ASM Shah-

jahan. now the Inspector

General of Police, was present

among other senior officials,

Emdad mentioned in his

"After verifying my identity

and the message, police offi-

cials sought a bond from me

stating that I received the per-

sons from police custody."

Completing the formalities.

Emdad came near the police

van in which Gen Manzur and

his family, Major Rezaul Karim,

and the family members of Lt

approached the police van.

Manzur reportedly told the

dered to you and we should be

Emdad said Gen Manzur

DIG: "Shahjahan, we surren-

in police custody. You cannot

was taken in the back seat of

his jeep while Maj Rezaul was

taken in another jeep. The

family members of Gen Manzur

and Col Delwar were taken in

another vehicle, Emdad re-

A number of police vehicles

escorted the army jeeps up to:

the Cantonment checkpost.

The jeep carrying Manzur en-

tered the Cantonment while

Maj Rezaul was taken to the

East Bengal Regiment Centre

CID team

any detail about the day's rou-

officials continued interroga-

tion of Maj Gen (retd) Abdul

Latif and Lt Col (retd) Shamsur

Rahman who were taken into

remand for another five days

Ministry officials said the two

former army officials who were

in Chittagong during the death

of Gen Manzur, had at last

started giving 'authentic' in-

"They have started melt-

Meanwhile, our court cor-

respondent in Dhaka says

there was a strong rumour in

town that another retired army

officer has been arrested in

connection with the case, but

it could not be confirmed by

formation to the investigators.

ing," the source added.

any police source.

A source quoting Home

From Page One

Meanwhile, in Dhaka CID

called.

(EBRC).

tine of the team.

on Saturday.

send us to the Cantonment."

When the army personnel

Col Delwar were detained.

Emdad stated.

After reaching Hathazari

office since the night before.

Before leaving the canton-

member detachment, left for

mained unutilised, he added. The private fertiliser dealers and distributors collect fertiliser only in the peak season because of their shortage

of godowns and lack of capital for long term investment, he On the other hand, he said. a section of bureaucrats advised the government to distribute fertiliser through the deputy commissioners (DCs)

and thana nirbahi officers

(TNOs) so that 'they could

make money from it.' "Right people have to be in the right place to do their job. The DCs and the TNOs would never understand the needs of farmers as they have so many other business relating to magistracy and revenue collection," Majed said.

Rice price had gone up by more than Tk 200 per maund in the last five months and scarcity of agricultural inputs persists, further affecting food production.

There is not a single developed country which does not provide subsidy in agriculture sector whereas the donors suggest withdrawal of subsidy from this sector in a poor country like ours," he

Even, in neighboring India, the government has announced increased subsidy for food and fertiliser in the next fiscal, Dr Majed pointed out.

"Our bureaucracy is so inefficient and bankrupt that it could not make the government aware of the real scenario in the country's agriculture sector," he said. The government has no information about the food situation in the country since the activities of the Food Department have been curtailed, he added.

Held at the Institution of Engineers, the press conference was attended by among others. A N H Akhtar Hossain. Mohammad Abu Hena, Dr Kazi Shahidul Alam and Nurul Huda.

Emdad said, contrary to the

instructions he had been

given, he did not find anyone

named Major Khaled with

Manzur and therefore Maj Rez-

aul, who was found with the

fugitive general, was taken in

that after reaching the Cant-

onment he, along with some

soldiers, were moving around

in the jeep, Gen Manzur with

them. After about two hours he

came across another jeep in

which he saw Lt Col Shamsur

Rahman (Col Shams). Quarter

Master General, EBRC Rezaul

and Maj Kamaluddin Bhuiyan

were also at the jeep. Col Sha-

ms asked Emdad the reason

for the delay in executing

Manzur and ordered him to

Then they veered the jeep

"We told the general our

Emdad quoted Manzur as

plan. It seemed the general

was aware of the matter."

Emdad said in his written

saying: "Tell my wife to forgive

me. I could leave nothing for

over a small Quran and a for-

mation sign to Emdad. The

major and other soldiers also

sought forgiveness from the

volunteered to shoot Manzur.

At this stage Emdad loaded

only on weapon and proposed

that all of them would shoot

Manzur one by one. But a

Havilder whose name, Emdad

recalled as Abdul Malek, then

shot the general once in the

head. Immediately afterwards

they left the spot because they

could not muster the courage

to check if Manzur was dead,

Emdad said in his statement

last, Emdad also made a judi-

cial statement before a magis-

trate under Section 164 of the

Criminal Procedure Code. A

copy of that statement could

not be gathered to check if

there were any inconsistencies

in Emdad's version of the cir-

cumstances leading to the

death of Gen Manzur.

After his arrest on March 1

three years ago.

Then, Emdad said, no one

Manzur reportedly handed

her and the children."

finish the job immediately.

towards the firing range.

statement.

general.

The retired major also said

with Manzur.

Emdad's statement



Opposition political activists who demonstrated near the Food Directorate in the city yesterday against the scarcity of fertiliser and price-hike of rice, hurled a bomb at the police on Topkhana Road near the Secretariat. - Star photo

Nurses' strike

From Page One

and Bangladesh Student Nurses Union (BSNU) enforced the nation-wide strike to realise their eight-point demand from Saturday.

Leaders of the nurses' organisations expressed their determination to continue the non-stop strike until their demands are met.

in the capital, many patients were seen leaving the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) due to lack of treatment. Fresh admission to the hospital also fell sharply.

Meanwhile, staff and nurses (students) of the DMCH have formed a squad to assist the physicians in emergency cases. Some 150 nurses of the squad are performing their duties in three shifts in the hospital where the number of staff and student nurses are 800.

HC issues rule From Page One

the Director General of Bangladesh Television (BTV).

The rule, returnable within eight weeks, was issued on a petition filed by advocate Dr Mohiuddin Faruq, General Secretary of the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association (BELA), said a press re-

In his writ, Dr Faruq said that one-sided and distorted publicity by BTV violated Article 39 of the Constitution and also curbed his fundamental rights.

He said that despite the BNP's election pledge to make radio and television autonomous, it had violated the commitment after assuming power. Instead, the party and its allies have turned the vital national medium into a publicity machine of the ruling party.

News and information broadcast by the national medium have lost credibility because of misuse, the lawyer said. As a result, citizens were being deprived of knowing the correct news. Moreover, the rights of tax-payers and TV licence holders were being curbed, he added.

WB programme

sustainable development.

From Page One

In refuting the superiority of NGO programmes in poverty alleviation, the Finance Minister cited that the government was spending Tk 4,500 crore in education during the current budget. "How much the NGOs have spent for educa-

While the Finance Minister boasted of the government efforts for poverty alleviation, he admitted he was having serious problem in reaching credits to the poor in a cost-effective

"How to reach credit to the poor — that is a question I have been facing as Finance Minister during the last four years. In fact, credit delivery to the poor has been the 'hardest task' of the government."

State Minister for Planning Dr A Moyeen Khan, while addressing the workshop, questioned the logic of high interest rates on rural credits, now between 18 and 22 per cent. as against 10-14 per cent on

urban commercial loans. The World Bank Chief Economist, Ms Joanne Salop, also appreciated credit programmes for poor being run by Grameen Bank and some

Chunnu when the flames

spread to his tin-and-bamboo

hut standing on stilts over the

if Chunnu had survived or per-

ished in the fire at the time of

filing this report late last

Nuru Mia couldn't find out

river Buriganga.

night.

Hillary Clinton to Terrible tragedy VISIT 5 SA states

From Page One from Mar 24 sleeping children. The First Lady of the United Many others also met simi-

States Mrs Hillary Rodham lar fates. Clinton will visit five South Two sons of Sattar Molla Asian countries from March 24 were also missing. to April 6, a USIS press re-So was rickshawpuller Nuru lease said in Dhaka yesterday, Mia, whose wife shoved out reports BSS. their 14-year-old blind son

The press release described her upcoming visit to Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka as "part of the US administration's continuing efforts to develop and strengthen US relationships in this increasingly important part of the world."

AL gherao programme

From Page One

put up barricades at the Zero Point, the Topkhana Road crossing and the High Court to prevent the demonstrators from carrying out their planned siege of the food office. Earlier, the AL held a rally

in front of its Bangabandhu Avenue office. Addressing the rally, AL

chief Sheikh Hasina criticised the government for the fertiliser crisis and food price hike and asked Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to quit. The AL leader alleged that

the existing fertiliser crisis and price-hike of food items were created by the "corrupt" BNP government. Hasina demanded accounts

of wealth and property owned by the ministers, MPs and other ruling partymen and their relations after levelling corruption charges on them. She also criticised the gov-

ernment for repressing the

farmers demanding fertiliser. "A suffocating atmosphere is prevailing in the country and you (PM) cannot cling to power through repression." The AL chief called upon her supporters to intensify the

on-going agitation for remov ing the 'inefficient', 'corrupt' and 'vote-dacoit' BNP govern-

Yesterday's demonstrations were part of the three main-

fortnight-long agitation programme announced at the end of the 48-hour hartal on March 13 demanding a caretaker government to conduct the next general elections and protesting price-hike of essentials including rice and paper.

stream opposition parties'

The JP and the Jamaat demonstrated near the Food Directorate on March 18 and 16 respectively.

The next identical programme of the opposition parties includes rail-road blockade on March 23 and Dhaka Siege on March 28.

Our Correspondents from Chittagong, Narayanganj, Kishoreganj and other districts say the opposition activists gheraoed the DC offices and submitted memoranda to the DCs. They also held rallies before and after the gherao programmes. No incident of violence was, however, reported from these places.

NSC lottery From Page One

ners of Tk one lakh each went to ticket nos. Csa-0281092. Kha-0083783 and Csa-0**26184**6.

Agriculture and Water Development Minister M Majid-ul Huq was the chief guest at the lottery draw ceremony.

Fire at Islambagh

From Page One panic in the locality.

At least three fire fighters were injured while struggling to douse the blaze. Six other injured were admitted to different clinics and the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The fire spread rapidly as there were many small plastic factories in the area.

According to local people, the shanties burnt in the fire were made bamboo and tins, each on a space of around two kathas with one to three feet distance from one another. Each of the structures were occupied by three to six families. Many of the families owned small plastic factories and the others living there were labourers.

As the fire broke out hundreds of residents ran for their lives towards the Islambagh Eldgah., many of them with their belongings. Scores of others were seen crying for their near and dear ones, who were missing. Many did not even know the extent of their damages since they were working outside and came to know about the fire later on.

The fire also intensified because of the absence of any suitable roads for movement of fire service vehicles. The only 'roads' in the area are actually spaces between houses constructed at random. The fire service people entered the area only with hose pipes and

used local water supplies at 7.30 pm, when local people had already brought the fire under control to a great ex-

Many local people also complained about looting of goods by hoodlums from the affected families. A police contingent was, however, sent to the spot later to ensure security in the area.

A few years ago, two incidents of fire in the same area claimed several lives and gutted all the houses.

Talking to this correspondent last night, local people expressed their dismay at the growth of so many small plastic factories in the area, saying these had caused fire twice in

They regretted that there were no broad roads in the area, for which rescue operations were hampered.

Four die, 25 hurt in Pabna road mishap

PABNA, Mar 19: Four people were killed and 25 others injured in a road accident at Sandhya in Bera thana on Nagarbari-Bogra highway today police and witnesses said, reports UNB.

The accident occurred at 2 am when a Manda-bound night coach of the United Transport from Dhaka plunged into a roadside ditch while negotiating the Chakla bridge.

600 held in Karachi in a week

Benazir gives extra powers to paramilitary troops

KARACHI, Mar 19: Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has given wide-ranging powers to paramilitary troops in Karachi to clamp down on terrorist activity, as political parties charged authorities were abusing their power, reports AFP.

Bhutto ruled out any redeployment of the army in the turbulent Pakistani commercial capital, contrary to earlier reports and speculation that military troops could be deployed to restore law and

In the first of a series of administrative changes expected through the week Bhutto gave additional powers to 15,000 paramilitary troops deployed in the city to carry out raids, investigations and

Paramilitary troops are commanded by army officers. More than 600 people have

been arrested this past week, as the death toll for the month rose to more than one hundred. Police and paramilitary troops conducted a night-long operation against terrorists in the city's eastern area of Shah Faisal colony, officials said today, but any further arrests were not reported.

Bhutto's decision to grant the extra powers was immediately denounced by the city's main opposition group, the ethnic-based Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM). The powers given to

(paramilitary) rangers will not solve the problem. They will do what they have been doing in the past, this crackdown is against us and will not produce any results," said a spokesman for the mainstream MQM. headed by self-exiled leader Altaf Hussain. •

Ershad's trial resumes today

By Staff Correspondent

Defence lawyers continued cross-examining the investigating officer in the trial of former president H M Ershad in what is popularly known as the Jatiya Party Office Case.

Kartick Chandra Das. presently an Additional Superintendent of Police, will again answer defence lawyers queries when the court resumes at 11 this morning.

Although the deposition of 20 prosecution witnesses including Das was completed earlier the police officer was recalled upon a prayer from he prosecution. Former Works Minister

Mostafa Jamal Haider and

Works Secretary M A Rouf are the co-accused in this Special Case No 50, the trial of which began in 1993. Additional District and Sessions Judge, Dhaka Zinat

Ara is the presiding judge.

1.75 lakh Rohingyas repatriated

More than one lakh 75 thousand refugees have been repatriated to Myanmar till date, reports BSS.

This was disclosed by Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury to the visiting Director of United Nations High Commis sion for Refugees (UNHCR) Dennis MacNamara at the former's office here yesterday.

PM reviews From Page One

Begum Zia was also informed that boro cultivation in North Bengal will not be af fected as planting of boro seedlings starts a little late in the northern districts than in southern parts of the country.

The Prime Minister was further informed that production in Chittagong Urea Fertilizer Factory has resumed, and the finished goods will be available within a couple of The Jamuna Fertilizer Fac-

tory, which had to suspend production since Saturday night due to mechanical fault. will also resume operation from to night, the meeting was Begum Zia was apprised

that there are adequate stocks in the country to meet fertiliser requirements for the month of March, the peak period for boro cultivation.

The meeting also discussed in details the present crisis

DSE index falls From Page One

gainers, 34 losers and 16 remaining unchanged.

Market operators attributed the sudden fall in the DSE index to the decline in the share prices of some big issues which have higher weightage in the index because of their larger market capitalisation.

The big losers on the day include Islami Bank (Tk 6.94 per share), Aziz Pipes (Tk 34.56), Bangladesh Lamps (Tk 18.53) and BTC (Tk 6.55). While the gainers included First ICB Mutual Fund (Tk 39.41), Singer (Tk 45.31), Monno Jute (Tk 40), Renata (Tk 27.14), and Square Pharmaceuticals (Tk 11.61).

Total market capitalisation also declined Sunday to Tk 42.45 billion from Tk 42.58 billion at the end of the previous day's trading. Turnovers, however, increased totalling 116.239 shares worth Tk 1.77 crore as against 103,006 shares valued at Tk 1.35 crore the day earlier.

Deportees

From Page One went to receive the deportees commented, "It was almost like our coaster and it should not have carried passengers more than eight or nine hun-

The deportees also alleged that the crew had misbehaved with them on board the ship. The deportees, after rea-

ching here also staged demonstration and chanted slogans against the crew. At that time special police teams were deployed at the port jetty to control the situation. Meanwhile, a deportee. Md

Yusuf (27), told this correspondent that he had gone to Jeddah by collecting valid visa and other documents at a cost of Taka 73,000/- through a recruiting agency on December 19, 1993.

Yusuf, who hailed from Noakhali, said he had been working at Jeddah Sheraton Hotel at a monthly salary of 800 Saudi riyal. But he was rounded up from a market and his work permit (ekama). which he produced, was torn by Jeddah police, Yusuf said. "Then I was taken to jail

from where I was deported with others," he added. Another deportee. Md

Mozaffar (30), who went to Mecca in 1987 as a worker under a construction firm, said "I was not paid my salary as per agreement, rather. I was

deported by police". Mozaffar hails from Cox's Bazar district.

The Midnight Bile

Chechens brace for

NAZRAN (Russia), Mar 19: Chechen rebels braced for new fighting Sunday after columns of Russian armor headed to the east of the breakaway republic in an apparent buildup for a military offensive. Also on Sunday, a military official said an army helicopter had crashed in Chechnya, killing all three crew members, the ITAR-Tass news agency reported, reports

17 to vie for each DU first yr Hons seat

As many as 17 students will compete for each seat in the first year Honours class in the Dhaka University for the session 1994-95.

About 63,313 candidates have applied for 3.787 first year Honours seats this year. according to DU sources. Last year, some 51,983

students applied for 3,737 seats and the ratio was 14:1 while it was 13:1 in the previ-Yesterday was the last day

for selling and accepting the application forms for admis-The sale of forms began on

February 15 last. This year, the highest

number of candidates - about 21.319 - have applied in 'Ka' unit (Faculty of Science) in

Zahir's murder

From Page One could not remember the day

he had left the country for India after Zahir's murder. Mohammad Alam said Ta-

pash had introduced him to Akhteruzzaman Babu, the Awami League MP, and he was not aware of any pseudonym of Babu. He said it was not correct that the person with whom he was introduced was not in fact Babu, rather Barkatullah Bhulu, a BNP MP. He also denied that he had killed Babu.

Defence lawyers advocate Khan Saifur Rahman and Advocate Mosharraf Hossain Kajal cross-examined the approver. Three witnesses have been

examined so far. Alhaj Zahurul Huq, father-in-law of the victim, was examined on October 9 last year and Abul Hossain, a guard at the residence of Zahir, on January 8 this year.

Humayun Zahir, a leading businessman, was murdered at his Dhanmondi residence in the city on April 8, 1993.

Zahir's relatives pointed the finger at Akhteruzzaman Babu, an Awami League MP and business associate of Zakir. The two later fell out.

Babu jumped bail and is now reported to be in the

United States.

Subject

Language

DFP-6301-18/3

G-415

which only 15,350 students applied last year.

About 17,030 candidates have applied in the 'Kha' unit (Faculty of Arts) for which 12.600 students applied last

Some 10.739 students are vying for the 'Ga' unit (Faculty of Commerce) this year, while some 7,907 students applied

submitted their application for the 'Gha' unit, while the number of candidates in this unit last year was 16,126. Students willing to change their

Around 47.012 students applied for 3.727 seats in 1992-93 session, 44,400 for 3.692 seats in 1991-92. 43,000 for the same number of seats in 1990-91 and 39,000 for 3.500 seats in 1989-90. according to available statis-

begin on April 7.

out a procession in the thana In Sadar thana, 20 people

700 at Bahuli Bazar, witnesses and police said. The situation was brought under control with police intervention. Meanwhile, activists of the Awami League and Jamaat-e-Is-

cessions in the district town protesting price hike of fertiliser, rice and paper. They marched through the

streets and staged demonstrations in front of the DC office at around 11:00 am.

retary Abdul Latif Mirza and Jamaat district unft president Maulana Ali Alam.

They later submitted a memorandum to the DC stating the fertiliser crisis in local markets. In Kazipur, they said, a bag of urea was selling at Tk

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212

the Occasion of World

Essays are invited from school and college & university students for competition in two groups on the occasion of observing World Health Day on

April 7, 1995. Group A Subject

One thousand. Number of words Language Bengali. Size of paper Group B

Class to University "Target 2000 — a world without

polio". One thousand five hundred. Number of words English.

: $13.5^{\prime\prime} \times 8.5^{\prime\prime}$ white paper. Size of paper

competitor's respective head of institution or first class gazetted officer and should reach the office of the undersigned during office hours by March 28, 1995. Attractive prizes will be awarded to the winners.

Dr A M Zakir Hossain

Health Education Bureau Directorate of Health Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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fresh fighting

By DU Correspondent

groups have to apply through 'Gha' unit.

The admission tests will

From Page One

were injured in a clash over a bag of fertiliser selling at Tk

The processions were led by AL district unit general sec-

Health Education Bureau

Directorate of Health

Sub: Essay Competition on

Health Day '95

For students of Class VI to Class X. "Role of students in building a polio-free Bangladesh".

> : $13.5^{\circ} \times 8.5^{\circ}$ white paper. For students of Higher Secondary

The essay shall have to be attested by the

Chief

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in this unit last year. Some 14,225 students have

headquarters and held a rally with Nazrul Islam presiding.

lami brought out separate pro-

Dt. 15/03/1995 Memo No. DH/HEB/95/24607/10