8 JP (Ershad) MPs meet PM.

extend support

Eight opposition lawmakers belonging to Jatiya Party (Ershad) called on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday and appreciated government's achievements in different fields I the last one year. They also extended support to the

ongoing countrywide joint drive by the

army, police and BDR to nab the

MPs for their contribution in develop-

ment activities in the last one year and

Mohammad Mandol, M Moshiur

Rahman, Mohammad Ali Sarkar,

Shah M Solaiman Alam, M Motiur

Rahman, Hafizuddin Ahmed, M

Majibur Rahman and Karim Uddin

The MPs praised Khaleda's efforts

to resist crime and maintain law and

order as per her election pledge.

The prime minister thanked the

The JP MPs were Noor

criminals and recover illegal arms.

sought their cooperation in future.

to army drive

BSS, Dhaka

# 'Access to electricity in country up by 17pc since 1971'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The access to electricity in the country has soared by around 17 per cent since independence, according to USAID.

Its officials told reporters during a field trip to several US AID-supported projects at Savar that in 1971 three per cent of the total population in Bangladesh had access to electricity; today, the number is around 20 per

Considering electricity as a wheel of development, US AID had contributed about \$200 million for establishment of rural electrification programmes through formation of Dhaka Palli Bidyut Samity-1 (DPBS), a business success in co-operative

Bangladesh has a large unsatisfied demand for energy, which is growing by 10 per cent annually. It has the lowest per capita consumption of commercial energy in South Asia. The country has an installed capacity of 3,300 megawatts (MW); however, only 2,600 megawatts are considered "available" at any given time, an USAID official said.

As a result, the country has been unable to meet the demand for electricity, and all parts of the country, including the capital, Dhaka, experience frequent load-shedding.

To respond to the growing energy demand, the country has allowed private independent power producers into the market since1996, US AID officials said.

They said this measure aims to increase the supply of energy to over 6,500 MW by the year 2005 However, it will still mean a shortfall of more than 1,000 MW due to the retirement of older power stations.

US AID Bangladesh Mission Director Gene V. George told reporters that Bangladesh has very large natural gas resources. If utilised fully,

the gas resources could accelerate energy sector development and

growth is more than an indispensable condition for economic development. said MA Sabur, general manager of

He said the DPBS-1 was established with a 0.5 MW generation capacity with only 500 subscribers but now it has 1.39.00 subscribers and the number of subscribers have

The rural electrification programme is considered one of the country's most successful development efforts. "The programme is based on the US cooperative model that successfully electrified rural America," George said.

Since the inception of the project, 67 Palli Bidyut Samity (PBS) have been established and 144,000 km of lines have been constructed. Over 36,000 villages have been electrified serving over 25 million people.

The project has only 9.68 per cent systems loss against the Power Development Board's 18 per cent and Dhaka Electric Supply's 32 per cent. It has earned a net profit of Tk 580 million in the fiscal 2001.

MD said the DPBS-1 has 99 per cent bill collection. It only has some defaulters with the government and autonomous bodies.

programme employs over 10,000 people and additional 30,000 jobs have been created by sales of electric hardware.

project run by Helen Keller ternational (HKI) at Ashulia

providing food supplement and

Chittagong-bound Udavan Express

entered the station ignoring signal.

The guard, loco-master and assistant

loco-master of the train and the on-

duty station master at Azampur have

been suspended for negligence in

committee has been formed to

investigate the accident. The com-

mittee comprise BR's chief mechani-

cal engineer, chief traffic manager,

chief engineer and the additional

chief cable and signal engineer, the

Besides, the Government

Railway Inspector (GIBR) will also

conduct a separate investigation, it

He was shown arrested in the case

political secretary to Awami League

Chief Sheikh Hasina, was picked up

by army from Zia International

Airport on October 20. He was

scheduled to fly to London in a

under Section 54 of the CrPC and

on October 24 in a case filed with

Savar police station in connection

with an attack on a motorcade of the

Later, he was shown arrested

Saber was also shown arrested

Saber Hossain Chowdhury, also

A four-member high-powered

duty, the press release said.

press release said.

FROM PAGE 12

the same day.

Saber Chy

Singapore Airlines flight.

on a three-day remand.

duced before the court today.

placed on a two-day remand.

"The gardening not only provides

## Train accident kills10

Hospital. Of them, condition of three was critical.

High officials of Bangladesh Railway (BR) who rushed to the spot and supervised the salvage operation admitted eight deaths but unofficial sources put the toll at ten.

After the accident, the angry passengers joined by local people attacked the station and damaged windows and some documents, the witnesses said.

Two relief trains, one from Dhaka and the other from Chittagong, reached the spot at about 6 am and 9 am respectively yesterday

started salvaging the coaches. Train communication resumed at about noon yesterday through alter-

nate tracks at the station. General Manager of BR's Eastern

Zone AKM Rezaul Karim, DIG of Railway Police Ali Imam Chowdhury and the Deputy Commissioner of Brahmanbaria visited the spot. The GM said primary investiga-

tion revealed that faulty signal was the cause of the accident...

When contacted. Azampur Station Master Abul Kalam Azad said that the signal point suddenly became faulty when the Chittagongbound train from Sylhet was coming to Azampur. As a result, the train entered the station ignoring the signal. Station Master AKM Hafizur Rahman was on duty when the

accident took place. Our Staff Correspondent in Dhaka adds: ABR press release said preliminary investigation suggests that the accident took place as the promote rapid economic growth. For Bangladesh, energy sector

been increasing 15 per cent per year.

Talking to newsmen, the DPBS

The rural electrification

The USAID officials also took journalists to homestead gardening

The concept would work through

The court also issued rule in this

Justice Abdur Rashid and Justice Siddigur Rahman Miah passed the

#### Sk. Selim

involvement in the attack on be detained in the jail until submission of the chargesheet.

in Gopalganj, he added.

food and medicine for him.

tion opposed the bail petition.

petition and issued a detention authorities to arrange necessary steps for treatment and to allow medicine for her husband.

then opposition leader Khaleda Zia on June 17 last year. He was placed The three-day remand ended yesterday and Saber will be pro-

#### Train mishaps

the accidents while technical occurred due to miscellaneous causes.

to carelessness and negligence of either the driver concerned or the guard, railway sources said.

Sources quoting preliminary findings of railway authority said the driver of Svlhet-bound Udavan Express had totally disregarded the signal prior to the accident. Besides, the train was moving at a speed of 40-km per hour instead of 10-km per hour at the time, sources revealed.

According to the statistics, 249 accidents occurred in 1991-92, 233 in 1992-93, 378 in 1993-94, 292 in 1994-95, 239 in 1995-96, 413 in 1996-97, 257 in 1997-98, 358 in 1998-1999, 456 in 1999-2000, 552 accidents in 2000-2001.

However, the figure for a period The figure for this year was 156



The ATDP-II has provided technical assistance to the company to formulate new cattle feed product. The ATDP II also assisted the firm in updating the existing product formula, which resulted in quality improvement, reduction of produc tion cost, and a significant increase in

vegetables for poor families but also

help them to earn cash by selling

excess produce," said an HKI official.

The officials also took journalists to a primary health care clinic located at Desgao, Savar, providing a full range of the essential health services including family planning, maternal and child health, immunisation, reproductive tract or sexually transmitted infection cases.

The project also provides counselling of HIV/AIDS, adolescent health and treatment of common

## Ex-whip Shuja get ad-interim

The High Court yesterday granted ad-interim bail to former Whip of the Jatiya Sangsad and Khulna City Awami League leader Mustafa

regard. A division bench comprising

Mustafa Rashidi Shuja was arrested under Section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code by the

Barrister M Amirul Islam moved the petition on behalf of the peti-

forwarding report to the court. In the report, the investigation officer (IO) of the case said he gathered some important information about Selim's Khaleda's motorcade and he should

Selim, a former health minister. told the court that he was not present at the place of occurrence on the day of the incident. That day, he was

The defence lawyers submitted four petitions for his bail, treatment in jail, division in jail as an MP and permission to Selim's wife to supply

On the other hand, the prosecu-

Hearing both sides, Magistrate Eshak Hasan rejected the bail order. The court also directed the iail Selim's wife to supply food and

Selim was arrested on October 21 in his Banani residence and later shown arrested under Section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code

This latest collision, between the Chittagong and Sylhet bound Udayan Express, has claimed eight

Human elements such as breach of rules have caused 25 per cent of defects have been the cause 50 per cent of the accidents, according to the assessments of Bangladesh Railway. The remaining have

The latest accident occurred due

of six months from July to December of the year 2001 was not available. till September, sources said



### Unocal expects early PM congratulates decision on gas export to India

cannot go into production as

domestic demand is saturated.

Under the circumstances, Unoca

cannot afford to sit idle for an indefi-

In this connection, he mentioned

that Petrobangla owes money to

Unocal in unpaid gas bills, as the

state-run organisation could not

make payments for the last six

raising the gas production any time

provided there is a positive decision

about gas export. Besides, new

discoveries are also only a matter of

proposal to the government for a

gas pipeline project from Bibiyana to

India and are waiting for a decision

soon in this regard. Under the

project, 30-inch-diameter pipeline

extending 1363 kilometres could

supply 500 million cubic feet of gas

daily to India for export. Through

such export, Bangladesh could earn

US\$3.7 billion over a period of 20

years in revenue and taxes, plus

there will be another 500 to 700

million dollars of investment for

installation of the pipeline," he

Magurchhara blowout, Stone said

the issue has remained unresolved

due to disagreement over the extent

of environmental damage caused

by the explosion, adding that a third

party is now mediating in the dis-

A court here on Saturday sentenced

a man to death by hanging and five

others to life term imprisonment for

years of rigorous imprisonment.

Later he succumbed to his inju-

After examining records and

witnesses, Additional District and

Sessions Judge Ansar Ali handed

Sea-beach

management

body formed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctq

A high-powered sea-beach man-

agement committee was formed

yesterday as part of a government

bid to attract tourists from home and

abroad to the world's largest beach

deputy commissioner of Cox's

Bazar was formed at a high-level

meeting chaired by State Minister

for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir

officials of the Bangladesh Parjatan

Corporation and the local adminis-

tration as members and the local

discussion on prospects and prob-

lems of tourism in Cox's Bazar.

also present at the meeting.

The meeting held a threadbare

State Minister for Commu-

The committee includes the

Mohammad Nasiruddin.

MPs as advisors.

The committee headed by the

ries at Comilla Medical College

The man condemned to death is

One to die

for murder

UNB. Comilla

and Amir Hossain.

down the verdict.

in Cox's Bazar.

Replying to a question about the

"We have already put forward a

He said there is ample scope for

months due to fund shortage.

time and decision, he added.

nite period, he said.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT. Sylhet

US oil giant Unocal organised a discussion meeting here yesterday where a top IOC executive urged for an expeditious government decision in favour of gas export to India.

Addressing the meeting, Jim Stone, president of Unocal South Asia Energy Limited, said the international oil companies (IOCs) working in Bangladesh are expecting an early decision from the government on the gas export issue as the IOCs cannot afford to wait indefinitely as the issue drags on.

The meeting was organised in the backdrop of a Chittagong-bound long march opposing export of the country's gas. Local people including business leaders, educationists and journalists attended the meeting held at a restaurant here yesterday afternoon

Stone said a clean policy decision by the government is the need of the hour to stimulate further foreign investment, which is very important for the country to attain

Referring to different studies including the USGS (United States Geological Survey) report and Norwegian Hydrocarbon study. Stone said Bangladesh has enormous gas reserve, which should leave surplus gas for export after meeting domestic demand. He said there is a great demand for Bangladesh's gas in northern India and pipeline export of surplus gas. which would fetch an annual income of US\$1.4 billion for the country, is the best way to exploit this natural

But he said the opportunity might not last long since Bangladesh might lose out to other competitors in the market who are bidding for a contract for gas export to India.

Referring to the Bibiyana and Jalalabad Gas fields developed by Unocal, he said Petrobangla was now buying only 10 per cent of the gas produced from these two fields. while the Moulvibazar gas field

### Acid attack on housewife in Satkhira

A housewife was seriously injured when a gang of miscreants threw acid on her at Debnagar village under sadar upazila of the district Saturday evening.

Police and victim's family said, Sufia Begum, 48, wife of Motalib Gazi, received burn injures in her hand, belly, leg and back when the miscreants allegedly led by Akber Ali Gazi of the same village threw acid on her through the window of a kitchen. She was admitted to Satkhira Sadar Hospital in a critical

### 5 of a family get life term for murder

A CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

The First Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court. Barisal. vesterday awarded life term imprisonment to five members of a family

in Shajahan Shikder murder case. The convicts are Balu Khan, Motalib Khan, Saiful, Mahtab and The court also fined them Tk

5000 each, in default, they will

have to suffer one more year in jail. According to the prosecution, Shajahan Shikder was killed in 1999 at Halua village in Bakerganj Upazila of the district over a land

#### Tipu on winning **Press Freedom** Award UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday congratulated Tipu Sultan, a journalist, for winning international Press Freedom Award 2002 for courageous professional work.

This is for the first time that a iournalist in South Asia has been honoured by this prestigious award.

Tipu Sultan was mercilessly beaten in Feni by musclemen of Awami League leader Joynal Hazari on January 25, 2001 for his objective reporting on atrocities of the Hazari Bahini when he was the UNB correspondent in Feni.

"I praise your courage, firmness and commitment for divulging truth amid adverse situation and in the face of repression." the prime minister said in her letter to Tipu.

She hoped that this unique

example of Tipu would remain as a source of inspiration to other jour-Khaleda Zia wished Tipu good

health, professional efficiency and success She had visited Tipu at Pangu Hospital last year. His legs and hands fractured, Tipu underwent

seven operations in a Bangkok

hospital. Tipu Sultan, who is currently working at daily Prothom Alo in Dhaka, yesterday expressed his happiness for the award and said he was inspired it.

#### Three to die FROM PAGE 12

tribunal handed down the judgement. Of the four, Jewel was tried in absentia.

special Three persons were given the death sentence yesterday and another one sentenced to life in prison by a special court on women and children repression in a sensational rape and murder case

### ISPR

FROM PAGE 12

to the police first and later sought

Shahjahan alias Shaju. The five help from the army in the area. other convicts who were sentenced As a result, a group of army to life in prison are Abu Taher, Abdur personnel cordoned off the Rahman, Jashimuddin, Nurul Islam Sangshad Bhaban area at around 6:30pm in an effort to nab the The five were also fined Tk snatchers.

20,000 each, defaulting on which A panic among the general will automatically result in five extra people occurred when the army initiated the cordoning and a chaotic According to prosecution, the situation resulted. Some people convicts beat and hacked Abdul were also injured during the ensuing Kuddus, 38, of Anantapur village in Debidewar upazila over past enmity.

However, the situation was brought under control with the army personnel explaining their activities. The army neither used baton nor

#### beat up any person during the operation, the ISPR claimed. Schoolteacher

FROM PAGE 1

unidentified gunmen.

court however granted three. The police picked up the four from North Road in Bhutergoli where Swapon, a teacher of the Government Laboratory High School, was shot and killed by

They were taken to the Dhanmondi Police Station for interrogation. Three were later released, as their implication with the case was not proved, Dhanmondi police said.

"We have shown Monirul arrested as his involvement with the murder was primarily proved," said duty officer of the Dhanmondi Police Station. He guoted the First Information Report (FIR) saying that the killer stayed at Monirul's laundry shop at 2nd North Road before the

"We believe that he has close links with the killers." the duty officer Kabirul Islam Molla, sub-

inspector (SI) of Dhanmondi police, is the investigation officer of the Meanwhile, family members of Swapon took his body to Feni yesnications Salahuddin Ahmed was

terday for cremation.

# Sheikh Helal's cousin

yesterdav

were arrested.

from Bogra.

**FROM PAGE 1** 

Masum's house at around 1:00am and knocked on the door. As Masum opened the door, he was asked about his profession and his political background.

The Daily Star that the army team tied and blindfolded Masum and asked him to hand over illegal

troops started beating him. They also searched the house.

dence, which was a couple of minutes' walk away.

there was any firearm in the house. When she said no, they said they would continue to beat her brother-in-law until the firearm was

army camp at the Sheikh Nasir Stadium.

Star. However, Masum was not released. On Thursday morning, the 38ear-old Jubo League leader fell sick and was left at the KMCH premises unattended. Next morn-

where he died yesterday

DMCH morgue for autopsy. photograph, said the lower part of

severe torture and was damaged. in any case anywhere in the countrv. his mother told our Khulna

the countrywide drive yesterday, the army arrested 212 people including 70 listed criminals and

recovered 32 firearms. There was neither any arrest

lived in, an army team went to

was a licensed firearm in his brother Shawkat Biswas' resi-

handed over to them.

correspondent.

Khulna today. In the evening yesterday, the AL, the Jubo league and the Bangladesh Chhatra League jointly brought out a procession in

Meanwhile, on the 11th day of

#### nor recovery of firearms in Chittagong due to what army sources called a change in tactics. In Mymensingh three people -

Abul Kalam Azad, Jogindra

Chandra Hrishi and Barun Hrishi -

were arrested in the early hours of

Jativatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) -

Shentu Khan and Mizan Sikder -

hauled up during a joint drive in the

southwestern districts of Barisal,

Bhola, Jhalakathi, Patuakhali

Of them 14 each were arrested

from Barisal and Bhola, three from

Jhalakathi, nine from Patuakhali,

11 from Barguna, nine from

In Sylhet 13 people including an

In Gaibandha 16 people were

So far, the army has arrested

hauled up in the last two days. Also

arrested was a Jubo Dal leader

2,928 people, including 1,027

listed criminals, and seized 302

firearms along with 7,456 rounds of

ammunition since the drive began

Latifur Rahman

In the petition, they said that they

were not mentally prepared as their

senior colleague Sirajul Haq was in

A bail petition on behalf of

Shahidul Islam alias Shahid, mair

accused in the case, was also

submitted to the court yesterday.

The court fixed October 30 for

Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, 15,

All the six accused Shahid,

Hasan, Badal, Shaniram, Minu and

Parvin -- now in iail custody, were

coma at a hospital.

hearing the petition.

Shariatpur and 12 from Madaripur.

identified criminal were arrested.

Barguna and Shariatpur.

In Madaripur two leaders of the

Seventy-two criminals were

Another employee, Ekhlas, told

When he said he was not in possession of any weapon, the

At one stage, Masum said there

The troops then took him to his brother's house. As Shawkat was not home, the army team asked his wife Anjuman Ara Biswas whether

Later. Masum was taken to the

Next morning, Anjuman Ara handed over a licensed gun to the army, Rommel Biswas, Masum's vounger brother, told The Daily

ing, as his condition deteriorated. took him to the DMCH

Masum's body was sent to the Several photojournalists, who went to the hospital to take his

Masum's body bore marks of Masum was not even implicated

His body would be taken to

protest at Masum's death in army custody.

the youngest daughter of Latifur Rahman. Chairman of Transcom. was raped and murdered at their Gulshan residence on the night of April 23, 1998.

produced in the court during the Special public prosecutors Arfan Uddin Khan, ABM Sharfuddin Khan Mukul, Saima Khanam and Assistant PP Anisur Rahman appeared for the state while advocates Mosharraf Hossain Kajol Mohammad Hanif, Mizanur Rahman, Anwarul Kabir Babul and MA Kamrul Hsan Khan Aslam

# **Ordinance: AL**

others would be tried in normal courts

for similar offences. AL leaders also criticised the arrest of people for possessing licensed arms and seizure of those arms. Samad Azad said the government did not ask people to surrender their licensed guns but are harassing

them for possessing those. Former home minister Mohammad Nasim said the government in a December 29 (2001) order cancelled arms licences issued during January-July in 2001, terming those illegal. But the High Court later gave a verdict against that order. So, there is no reason why army should

seize licensed guns, he said. Persons having licensed arms are now passing days in fear while criminals possessing illegal arms are getting away with those.

Replying to a question on the reported government plan to form a national security council with the authority to take decision on deployment of army in future, Samad Azad said. "Formation of a national security council can never be accepted."

He demanded immediate release of AL lawmaker Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim and AL chief Sheikh Hasina's political secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury. He also criticised the government for 'using' the army for arresting

'innocent political personalities' and

raiding and sealing off AL's Centre for

successful in curbing crimes and seizing illegal arms", the acting

Research and Information (CRI)

"We would like to see that the

current army drive remains above

political influence and becomes

#### Saitur

FROM PAGE 12 Director Frederick T Temple, ADB Country Director Toru Shibuichi, Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed and Finance Secretary Zakir Ahmed Khan spoke at the workshop.

The WB country director said the

sustainability of the fiscal deficit is an important issue because Bangladesh's fiscal performance has deteriorated considerably in recent years due to a sharp increase in expenditures, especially ADP's. "These increases were not

matched by commensurate growth in revenues. As a result, the central government deficit reached the equivalent of over six per cent of GDP in FY2000, compared with an average of 4.6 per cent during the 1990s." he said. Temple, however, appreciated

that the government reduced the central government deficit to 4.6 per cent in FY2002 and the FY2003 budget targets it at 4.1 per cent.

# Gas pipeline

Bonpara to Rajshahi 64-km 20inch pipeline and Bibiyana to Rashidpur 25-km 30-inch pipe-But the pipelines will be con-

sidered if the government agrees

on setting up a 30-inch export-

oriented pipeline that will transmit

500mmcfd gas -- which may be

augmented to 1,000mmcfd through compression. In this system, the minimum export volume will be 250mmcfd, which will gradually increase.

"The government must confirm

its willingness to export gas to

India," said a source quoting an ADB proposal The ADB also suggested that the wheeling charge of export gas transmission would be Tk 0.40 a cubic metre, while the gas price at Indian border would be three dollars a cubic metre.

But the report of the national

gas utilisation committee does not

support the immediate export of

gas. Moreover, people's senti-

ment does not tilt towards gas export. In this context, the government experts are looking for alternative sources for investment in pipeline infrastructure just in case talks between the ADB and the govern-

"We have set up power projects with private investment...and there are many pipeline builders ready to invest in gas infrastructure if the government opens up the sector to private investment." said a source. "It's only a matter of policy.

for financing. The non-resident Bangladeshis are also willing to invest." he added. The government has already decided on fully autonomising the GTCL and has finalised a draft for Gas Regulatory Commission.

There could be multiple sources

FROM PAGE 12 tion since it is necessary for complete cure of asthma. However, the doctors mentioned that complete cure is possible only for those who suffer from mild asthma.

presided over the seminar. Prof. on the occasion.

Therefore, it will not be difficult for the government to free the gas transmission sector, another

#### expert thinks. Asthma

State Minister for Health and

Family Welfare Amanullah Aman Selim Shakur, Prof. Syed Khairul Amin and Prof. Chowdhury Mohammed Haider Ali also spoke

# bail BSS, Dhaka