## SC says ACC notice

But Khaleda's counsel barrister Mahbub Uddin Khakon told The Daily Star though the SC cancelled stay on the notice the rule on ACC in this regard is still pending with the HC.

"As the rule is pending with the High Court we will go for hearing on it," Khakon said.

on different grounds and during drive. the hearing in the High Court we'll try to cover the points based on which Appellate Division has cancelled verdict on Hasina," Khakon said.

asked whether yesterday's verdict will be applied to Khaleda's petition against ACC notice as the

case regarding the notice. Khakon also said the notice issued to Khaleda by the ACC is of the ACC notice. itself defective.

different grounds during hearing on the HC rule issued following Khaleda's petition challenging ACC's notice asking to submit her notice will be the same.

Attorney General Fida M journalists following yesterday's separate writs.

judgment notices to other people issued by the ACC asking for wealth statements would become

Fida said the fates of about 200 graft cases of ACC became uncertain due to the HC verdict declaring ACC notice to Hasina illegal and indeed that verdict also created a stagnant situation in "We might have an argument the present anti-corruption

> The AG said yesterday's verdict dispels doubts about the future of around 200 graft cases

filed by the ACC. The HC on November 21 He made the comment when declared illegal issuance of the ACC notice asking Hasina to

submit her wealth statement. The HC gave the verdict after case pattern is similar to Hasina's hearing of an HC rule issued in August following Hasina's writ petition challenging the legality

The ACC issued the notice to He said they will argue on detained Hasina on July 17 and to Khaleda asking to submit her wealth statement on July 18.

Following Khaleda's writ petition challenging legality of wealth statement. But counsels the notice the HC on November for the state and Hasina said after 25 stayed its operation and issued yesterday's judgment the fate of a rule on ACC to explain why the all writ petitions challenging ACC notice would not be declared illegal

The HC had also stayed opera-Kamal and Hasina's chief counsel tion of the ACC notices to Sajeda, barrister Rafique Ul Hug told Naziur and Taimur following

## US HR report

accordance with its constitutional

obligations, reports UNB. Home Adviser MA Matin also dismissed the report that said former prime ministers Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia were arrested as the government failed to exile them in the first six months of its coming to power.

A foreign ministry spokesman noted that all, including the international community, are aware of the circumstances, which led to the declaration of the state of emergency early January 2007.

"It is understood that during the state of emergency, some fundamental rights remain suspended. However, the government is extremely careful about enforcing such provisions so that the fundamental rights are not infringed,"

the spokesman said. He said the report however acknowledges these aspects as it acknowledges various reform initiatives taken by the caretaker government, including separation of the judiciary from the executive, revision of the Police Act with adherence to human rights principles and standards, and several major steps to improve the prison

The US state department report also duly noted significant drop in the number of extrajudicial killings, introduction of special training courses on human rights for the agencies, including Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), and persons charged with criminal offences receiving due process, he said.

The report also noted freedom of religions being upheld, enhanced government efforts to combat trafficking in person and improving labour conditions. It further acknowledged the government's efforts to relax the extent of limitations placed on the media by the Emergency Power Rules.

The government is, however, disappointed at the report's lack of balance as evidenced in its failure to mention the significant reform measures taken by the caretaker government for consolidating and sustaining democracy," the

spokesman said. These include the restructuring and empowering of the Election Commission, the Public Service Commission and the Anti-

Corruption Commission." He said the report could further mention the initiatives taken with a view to establishing a "national human rights commission" and promulgating the Right to

Information Ordinance. These landmark reform initiatives would significantly improve democratic practices, leading to

human rights in a sustained manner," the foreign ministry spokes-

man added. Home Adviser MA Matin yesterday said the US state department cannot say that the two former prime ministers were arrested as the government failed to exile them in the first six months of its coming to power, reports our staff corre-

"You have seen our realities," Matin told reporters after a meeting on law and order at his ministry. He said the government has kept the two former premiers behind bars with due honour. "We have enough respect for them. We are regularly looking after them," he added.

The report mentioned suspension of many fundamental rights that include freedom of the press, freedom of associations and right to bail. It said the anti-corruption drives gave rise to concerns about due process.

Asked if the government will protest at the report, Matin said, We will have to think about our reality from our perspective."

The law and order meeting chaired by the home adviser also discussed the report. The home secretary, inspector general of police (IGP), inspector general (prisons), director generals of Bangladesh Rifles and Rab were

present at the meeting. Expressing deep concern at the | zones in the port city. members of law enforcement rising incidents of murder in the country, the meeting directed the law enforcement agencies to take the issue seriously.

> It also made it clear to the law enforcers that "custodial deaths are unacceptable", said officials.

### Indian customs

FROM PAGE 16 prices below \$650.

Sources said Indian rice exporters are preparing to file cases against the Indian government for the decision.

Petrapole customs officials also sent back a train wagon carrying 2,500 tonnes of rice from the land port yesterday afternoon.

Quoting a letter of the Indian commerce ministry, exporter Shaibal Das said the Indian government allowed export of rice at \$510 per tonne for which the bills of entries were submitted to Petrapole

customs on March 5 and 6. Petrapole customs Assistant Commissioner Anwar Hossain said the direction of the central commerce ministry was not clear.

Indian exporter Nirmal Shikari said many exporters are counting huge loss as their rice-laden lorries have remained stranded on the promotion and protection of Indian side for the last eight days.

## Airstrike

control of Gaza in June, responsible for the rocket fire, even though the radical Islamic Jihad group claimed the salvoes.

"Hamas controls the Gaza Strip and they are accountable for every active aggression against Israel," said government spokesman Mark Regev. "We will not allow Hamas to subcontract out terrorism." Both Hamas and Islamic Jihad, a

radical group that has claimed most of the rocket fire and suicide attacks against Israel over the past several years, vowed revenge after the Bethlehem deaths.

Israel, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad had been observing a tacit truce in and around the Gaza Strip since early Saturday as Egypt seeks to work out a more permanent deal.

Egypt has been holding talks aimed at ending Israeli strikes on Gaza, rocket fire into Israel and a lifting of a crippling regime of Israeli and international sanctions on the coastal strip, one of the world's most densely-populated places where most people depend on aid.

The violence in and around the Gaza Strip, where Hamas seized power in June after routing forces loyal to Abbas, has cast a shadow over peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians that were revived at a US conference in November.

Since then, at least 351 people, most of them Gaza militants, have been killed in violence between the two sides, according to an AFP count.

On Friday, Barak and Palestinian prime minister Salam Fayyad are to meet with US Lieutenant General William Fraser, appointed in January to oversee compliance with the 2003 international roadmap peace blue-

### DMC students

FROM PAGE 16 the intersection in front of their dormitory

During their protest, the students demanded immediate solution to their electricity problem which they claim hamper their studies regularly for several hours. They demanded their dormitory be connected to the power lines of either Dhaka Medical College (across the street) or Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, which suffer fewer power outages.

Provost of Fazle Rabbi Hall Prof Kazi Zulfiker Mamun said he called Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority (Desa) about the power cut and they told him that they are trying to figure out where the problem is and once it is found they would have it fixed and the power supply restored.

However, officials at Desa control room while talking to The Daily Star claimed that a problem with a power cable in New Rahmatgani area caused the power outage at the dormitory and they had it fixed around 11:30pm.

## Load-shedding

FROM PAGE 1 generation in Chittagong is suffering heavily. The shortfall is also creating a crisis in the industrial belt and the export processing

According to PDB data, two power units of Raozan in Chittagong are now producing maximum 300MW power although these can produce 360MW. A 90MW plant in Sikalbaha is pro-

ducing around 40MW. But the gas crisis went beyond Chittagong this time. The PDB says that due to gas crisis, an 85MW Ghorashal steam turbine power unit is now producing only 30MW. In addition, several units of Ghorashal combined cycle units having total generation capacity of 750MW are now producing

550MW A 96MW power unit in Haripur is producing 32MW, a 38MW power unit in Shahjibazar is producing 21MW, a 190MW unit in Siddhirganj is generating 90MW, a 20MW unit in Sylhet remains shut down and the 210MW plant of Rural Power Company Ltd is generating 160MW.

Petrobangla said the gas crisis mainly persists in Chittagong. "We have some localised problems in Ghorashal but we certainly do not have any supply problem in Sylhet," said an official

The gas supply shortfall will linger until new gas pipelines are built to increase the supply capacity. The country must also find new gas fields to meet its needs.

Meanwhile, the demand for power continues to soar. According to the PDB, there is demand for around 4,200MW power at present and it believes this will exceed 5,000MW this summer. With very poor implementation of new power projects and continued gas crisis, the country will face more load shedding and energy shortfall

FROM PAGE 16

Following a government petition, the High Court on September 6 discharged Hasina's plea for quashing the case filed in connection with shady deal to purchase eight fighter jets from Russia, clearing way for the case to pro-

Hasina, also a former prime minister, later filed a petition with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court seeking stay on the High Court verdict.

The hearing on Hasina's plea started Wednesday and on that day the Supreme Court stayed, for a day, the proceedings of the case at Dhaka Divisional Special Court, which earlier fixed March 13 for appearance of the accused.

One of Hasina's counsels barrister Fazle Noor Taposh told journalists that they brought the attention of the apex court about the proceedings of the case in the lower court. But, the apex court said when a verdict of a case is pending | an emergency disaster damage

FROM PAGE 1 parishads. The caretaker government wants upazila elections where

In its electoral roadmap announced on July 15 last year, the EC said the long-over due polls to upazila parishads would be held between November and December while the stalled ninth parliamentary

Recently, the council of advisers to the caretaker government has finalised amendment to Upazila Parishad Act to re-empower the EC to announce the schedule for upazila parishad elections.

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda has said on several occasions that the EC has decided to hold upazila elections but the commission is yet to decide on timetable for the polls. The voter lists of four city corpora-

tions and seven municipalities are likely to be finalised on March 24. The draft voter lists of the areas were published on February 18. The EC is now preparing to hold

polls to city corporations of Rajshahi, (Chittagong) in May.

announce the schedule for polls to city corporations and municipalities at the end of March but it may not able to do so since laws regarding city corporations and municipalities are likely to be finalised at the end of

UPAZILASWITH DRAFT

The EC began the field-level job of preparing the national voter list with photographs in August last year and has already completed registering voters in 80 upazilas, as of February. Voter registrations in another 20 upazilas are to be completed by mid-March, sources said.

The draft list of other areas will be published in phases on completion of registrations of voters to have the complete electoral roll by October.

The upazilas where voter registra tion has been completed are: Panchagarh Sadar, Thakurgaon Sadar, Nilphamari Sadar, Dinajpur Sadar, Taraganj, Rangpur Sadar, Gongachhara, Lalmonirhat Sadar, Aditmari, Gaibandha Sadar, Joypurhat Sadar, Naogaon Sadar, Dhupchachian, Kahalu, Bogra Sadar, Natore Sadar, Tanore, Chapainawabganj Sadar, Puthia, Poba, Pabna Sadar, Kushtia Sadar, Meherpur Sadar, Chuadanga Sadar, Jhenidah Sadar, Jessore Sadar, Narail Sadar, Satkhira Sadar, Rupsha, Bagerhat Sadar, Gopalganj Sadar, Faridpur Sadar, Rajbari Sadar, Manikganj Sadar, Savar, Delduar, Tangail Sadar, Polash, Narayanganj Sadar, Munshigani Sadar, Sariatpur Sadar, Madaripur Sadar, Gaurnadi, Jhalakathi Sadar, Patuakhali Sadar, Mirzaganj, Noakhali Sadar, Raipur, Chandpur Sadar, Comilla Sadar, Brahmanbaria Sadar, Ashuganj, Sarail, Kishoreganj Sadar, Habiganj Sadar, Moulvibazar Sadar, Golapganj, Sunamganj Sadar, Tahirpur, Netrakona Sadar, Bandarban Sadar, Sitakunda Rauzan, Rangamati, Khagrachhari,

**FINALISING THE LIST** The EC earlier planned to Once the draft list is published, it will be available for viewing for 15 days after its publication at the offices of district and upazila election officers or assistant registration officers, union parishad offices, municipality offices, ward offices, cantonment boards and polling stations used as

Feni Sadar, Jamalpur Sadar,

claims or ask for correction of mistakes within 15 days, if they find any. The revising authorities will look into

tive officers were given the job at metropolitan and cantonment areas

### Crowley FROM PAGE 16

change in Bangladesh and said Bangladesh Caucus would work to strengthen democracy in Bangladesh.

Earlier, Co-chair of the Caucus Congresswoman Nancy Boyda expressed her keen interest in the developments in Bangladesh and assured the readiness of Bangladesh Caucus to extend all possible cooperation to Bangladesh in her efforts to strengthen democracy.

Congressman Dennis Moore of Kansas, Congressman Bill Pascrell of New Jersey, and Jr Congressman Michael A Arcuri of New York were also present.

In his introductory remarks, Bangladesh Ambassador to the USM Humayun Kabir termed the Congress Caucus a strong pillar of support for Bangladesh in the United States and sought their support for promoting a mutually beneficial and dynamic bilateral partnership between Bangladesh and the USA.

During his presentation, Kabir reiterated the commitment of the caretaker government to democracy and outlined the progress toward holding the elections before the end of 2008. He also highlighted the initiative of the government to address the challenge of extremism and terrorism in Bangladesh, improve human rights situation including the progress towards the formation of the Human Rights Commission and efforts to improve workers' rights.

The Ambassador sought support of the Caucus for post-Sidr relief package which is being worked on in the administration passage of NPDA to accord duty-free market access to the US market and inclusion of Bangladesh in the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) programme.

The members of the Caucus promised to support Bangladesh on these issues and expressed their interest in remaining engaged in dialogue with the Embassy of Bangladeshin Washington. This is for the first time that the

Congressional Caucus sat with the Bangladesh Embassy in a formal Barge-mount plant

FROM PAGE 16 now admitted to city's Square

The prosecution opposed the petition and said there is no legal bar to carrying on with the hearing since the ailing former prime minister has lawyers to represent her in the court.

Of the eight accused in the case, former energy secretary Dr Toufiqe-Elahi Chowdhury was present.

The court on March 9 began the hearing after failing to do so in its previous six sittings. The same day it fixed yesterday for defence submission as the prosecution completed theirs. Hasina complained she was taken to the court despite her worsening health. ACC Deputy Director Sabbir

Hasan lodged the case with Tejgaon Police Station on September 2 last year, accusing Hasina and six others of abusing power to help a foreign company and its local partners win the deal for setting up a barge-mounted power plant. Former PDB chairman Noor

Uddin Mahmud Kamal, Managing Director of Summit Industries and Mercantile Corporation Private Ltd Aziz Khan, its Director Farid Khan United Group Chairman Hasan Mahmud Raja and its Director Abul Kalam Azad are the other accused. Later, Bangabandhu Memorial

Trust Curator Siddiqur Rahman was included as an accused in the charge sheet submitted on January 10.

### Hannan demands

FROM PAGE 16

released through legal means," he

Hannan was critical of the government for its failure to resolve the prevailing problems, including the soaring prices of essentials. "The government talked about many things but failed in many fields, including tackling the price hike," he said.

Earlier, he held a meeting with BNP leaders Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, Selima Rahman, Mohammad Shajahan and MA Mannan on how to make the party's Independence Day programmes on March 26 a success.

He said they would map out programmes to run BNP after holding meeting of the party's standing committee in the future. He said BNP would run at the instruction of Khaleda Zia and those who go beyond her instructions would make mistakes.

In reply to a question, he expressed optimism about the unification process of BNP but said it is a continuous process and it would take time.

Asked if BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain has leadership. been consulted about the Independence Day programmes, he said since Delwar is now in New York he could not be contacted over telephone.

### Tk 22 lakh seized

FROM PAGE 16

seven-day ultimatum to meet their six-point demand and threatened to go on tougher movement including laying a seize, strike and hartal programmes.

Their other demands include a judicial probe into the entire NGO scam, compensation to the ignorant victims, and seizure of wealth and property of the fugitive NGO men to distribute among the

They also demanded one-year postponement of interest collecthe fraud NGOs.

## Order for return

FROM PAGE 16 detained former prime minister

abroad for treatment. Reacting sharply to the adviser's comment, Hasina's personal doctors said such remark from an adviser to the government is unfortunate.

Both the jail authorities and the doctors treating Hasina at the Square Hospital kept mum yesterday about the latest condition of the ailing AL

COURT STAYS ORDER

Sub-inspector (SI) of the magistrate court AKM Ali Noor placed the prayer

on behalf of the state. In his prayer, the SI said that neither the state was given any scope for presenting its statements, nor the report of the investigation officers dealing with cases against Hasina was taken during the hearing. He sought a three-week stay on the earlier order.

After hearing, the court stayed its previous order until March 31.

On Wednesday, a counsel of Hasina filed a petition with the same court appealing to return Hasina her seized passport, as it might be needed any time for her trip abroad for treatment.

After hearing the petition, Magistrate Rabbani ordered the authorities concerned to give back the passport to its owner.

HASINA'S HEALTH CONDITION Neither the jail authorities nor any doctors of Square Hospital gave any official statement about the latest

health condition of Hasina yesterday. For the second day, none of her personal doctors was called to the hospital for the routine check-up.

Talking to The Daily Star, however, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Prisons Major Shamsul Haider Siddiqui said that the AL chief was doing well. She underwent some blood tests, he said adding that the ultra-sonogram test will be carried out today.

Maj Haider said that it would take a week to finish all tests. "After getting all the reports, her [Hasina's] actual condition will be known and then we will take further steps," he added. LAWADVISER'S COMMENT

Replying to a query yesterday about the suggestions for sending the AL chief abroad, Home Adviser Maj Gen (retd) MA Matin said that they cannot act on 'partisan' doctors' recommendations. "We cannot take steps on the

basis of recommendations by partisan doctors. The government has certain rules and regulations to saying in the media that she has been follow," he said emerging from a well, but actually, Sheikh Hasina meeting at home ministry when the reporters pointed out the recommendations of the physicians treating Hasina at the Square Hospital.

"If the doctors there say they are unable to treat her at the hospital, a medical board-will be formed to informing us anything about her examine her," Matin said, insisting that Hasina would be treated at the

Square Hospital.

admitted to the hospital on Tuesday with multiple health complications.

A panel of seven doctors includ-

To refer Hasina for treatment abroad, the doctors will have to inform the government in writing, Matin said replying to another

ing their treatment at appropriate

Earlier on February 21, Hasina

The personal doctors of Hasina slammed the home minister's comment, saying that as doctors, they are

ducted the medical check-up on the former prime minister are involved in politics, they added. "This remark is unfortunate

concerned. ABM Abdullah said, "An adviser

Adviser Matin to prove that he is a

the Square Hospital.

could not go to court today (yesterday) due to illness," Prof Modasser observed. We are in dark about the health

health and everything has been kept

his first chance to leave his country in

two years because of an ethnic

Malaysia handing over the presi-

dency of the 57 member organisa-

tion to Senegal's President

Abdoulaye Wade, host of the summit

which was twice postponed because

to become more involved in efforts to

The two day meeting started with

The CA, on behalf of the Asian leaders, extended heartiest congratulations to Senegalese President Wade on his assumption of the

that with your vast wisdom, and recognised skills, you will be able to guide our work to fruition. Your stirring inaugural remarks are a

time when the Muslim Ummah was facing new kind of challenges in a

saying his forward-looking visions and proficient leadership earned admiration of all. He expressed profound gratitude for the king of Morocco for leading the Al-Quds Committee, the president of Turkey for leading the

technology. Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf and Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Bin Ahmad

mit due to compulsions at home. of the OIC passes from Asian hands to Africa, he assured Asia's unflinch-

AFP adds: the summit was yesterday overshadowed by conflicts and new tensions that have stricken member nations.

Islamic Conference summit is meant to concentrate on a campaign against 'Islamophobia' in the West and efforts to reform the group and increase solidarity between its 57 members.

member, Chad, accused rebels based in another, Sudan, of crossing the border to launch a new offensive. Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai was preoccupied with a car

bomb in Kabul that killed six people, and Palestinian president Mahmud wrong step of the government that Abbas' attention was focused on renewed Israeli attacks in Gaza. Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was also a key figure at

with the United States over its country," he observed.

ing two of Hasina's personal doctors unanimously recommended immediately after her admission that there is no alternative to sending her abroad for treatment to avoid per-

related query.

The doctors at Square Hospital

tests, he added.

just concerned about their patient. None of the doctors that con-

like him [the home adviser]," ophthalmologist Prof Modasser Ali said while talking to The Daily Star last night and asked the adviser apologise to the public and to the doctors Protesting the home adviser's comment, medicine specialist Dr

partisan doctor. Sheikh Hasina has been under his treatment for a long time and she has confidence on him, the doctor

"Although the jail authorities are

condition of our patient," he added. Dr Abdullah said, "They are not

chairmanship of the forum. Your prodigious capabilities are legendary. We have every confidence

Fakhruddin expressed profound for organising the third extraordinary

fast-changing world.

forward movement. The CA appreciated the prime minister of Malaysia for sharing the work since the Putrajaya Summit,

Standing Committee on Commerce and Economic Cooperation and the president of Pakistan for chairing the Standing Committee on Science and

Badawi were absent from the sum-The CA said since the leadership

ing support to President Wade's

The 11th Organisation of the

The former prime minister was

manenthearing impairment.

The home adviser said the government is very sympathetic towards Sheikh Hasina and another former prime minister Khaleda Zia, and necessary steps will be taken regard-

have prescribed Hasina medicines and said that she requires around 20

was taken to Square Hospital and after a couple of hours' stay for check-ups there, she was taken back to the makeshift jail. DOCTOR'S REACTION

coming from an responsible person

cannot say this." He also asked

Both the doctors expressed deep concerns over the latest health condition of the AL chief, as they said that they were not informed about the reports of the medical tests done at

# Muslim Ummah

FROM PAGE 16 inaugural session of the summit as the new chairman.

testimony to your capability to lead." gratitude to King Abdullah, the custodian of the two holy mosques, summit in 2005. This was done at a

He said the historic outcome of that summit, the Ten-Year Porgramme of Action, proved to be the lifeline of the OIC, assisting its

But the event opened as one

the summit as he confronts tensions

In a message read at the meeting, Malaysia's Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who cancelled his attendance because of domestic political troubles, called for the OIC

Tuaregrebellion.

of construction delays.

secure "world peace"

Sector commanders The SCF in their application said they would arrange a discussion and cultural programme to pay tribute to the martyred freedom fighters while the invitation cards say the conven-

demanding trial of war criminals. The DMP commissioner added that the application said there would be a cultural programme while the invitations mention nothing about

tion would seek to marshal people in

Instead, they say working/representative sessions would

The sector commanders

described the government's decision

feature in the conference.

as "very unfortunate".

They outright rejected the DMP commissioner's allegations, and said there is no inconsistency between what has been stated in the invitations and the application for permis-"On January 14, we sent a letter to the government asking for its per-

decided against the convention," SCF President AK Khandker, former air force chief, told The Daily Star last night He said in no way would the

mission. But now when we are at the

final stage of our preparation it has

convention cause the law and order to deteriorate. "We organised similar programmes in six divisions and nothing untoward happened," added Khandker, who was the deputychief of the Liberation War Forces

Lt Gen (retd) M Harun-ar-Rashid,

former army chief and SCF chief

in 1971.

coordinator, told The Daily Star, "It was to be a non-political gathering and we don't understand why the government had to refuse us the permission. He said it's a contradictory and

would lead to questions in public

mind about it. "The authorities did not have any problem with our organising similar programmes in other parts of the

The war commanders will meet For President Mamadou Tandja today to decide on the next course of

"Poor children of either gender dowry over the last 30 years and with the Appellate Division, the rehabilitation project were with-Albie Morkel, Alviro Peterson, can rarely stay in school through to less than half of the women felt safe tion by different other NGOs from nuclear programme. proceedings of the case will remain | drawn as they failed to comply with Andre Nel, Paul Harris, Johan the upper grades. By Grade 9, when going out alone in their villages. where they took loan to invest with stalled in the lower court. procedural rules. Botha, Charl Langeveldt. of Niger, the gathering in Dakar was action.

# The report said despite the country's

Between 1971 and 2004 Bangladesh halved its fertility rates. In much of the country today, girls' secondary school attendance exceeds that of boys. Moreover, the gender gap in infant mortality has been closed," it said. The report said the micro-credit revolution continues to boost

women's solidarity groups and

achievement, women's access to

reproductive health services, labour

markets, physical security and role in

decision making need urgent atten-

earning potential, and a vast number of the young women are leaving their villages to work in garment factories. In earlier generations, young women were rarely seen outside their homes. While gender inequalities in children's health have diminished. Bangladeshi women still lack adequate access to reproductive health services. "Almost 90 percent of Bangladeshi women give birth at

It said there is already a huge gap in educational attainment between the rich and the poor, and the quality of schooling is an issue of concern.

assist," according to the report.

home, and over 86 percent do not

have a skilled birth attendant to women's groups in rural areas.

nearly 100 percent of children from rich families are enrolled, the ratio in terms of poor families is 20 percent," the report said.

although they have doubled in the last 10 years. Women's employment in South Asia is among the lowest in the world and Bangladesh is at the lower end of the South Asian spectrum. The report said four percent of

women (less than one fourth of men)

of prime working age work for a cash

wages and 81.5 percent of the difference between men's and women's agricultural wages is unexplained. About women's role in decision making, it said most women's influence over decision-making is confined to household functioning despite the presence of formidable

Low access to land and property

The report further found that

there has been an increase in

is an important part of their low

voice in decision-making

Women's status

wage in Bangladesh and in the casual agricultural labour market, women earn about 60-65 percent of men's

throughout the year. The report found that despite increasing education and declining fertility, the rate of women's participation in the labour force is very low

# 100 Upazilas

the voter list is ready.

polls by the end of the year.

Khulna, Barisal and Sylhet, and municipalities of Manikganj, Shariatpur, Cox's Bazar, Sripur (Gazipur), Phulbaria (Mymensingh), Golapganj (Sylhet) and Sitakunda PROCEDUREOF

March.

LISTS READY

Niko case FROM PAGE 1 provide a statement on her own defence regarding the allegations brought against her and six others in another Niko graft case in connection with causing a loss of over Tk

submit the statement.

Besides, the ACC yesterday approved submitting three' charge sheets against detained Awami League (AL) Joint General Secretary Obaidul Quader, indicting him for taking bribes. The ACC also approved submitting a charge sheet against Sajedul Hossain Chowdhury alias Dipu

Chowdhury, son of former state

minister for shipping Mofazzal

Hossain Chowdhury Maya, for not

ACC Assistant Director Shahidur

submitting his wealth statement.

13,630 crore to the government

exchequer by initiating the process of

the deal with Niko. In the letter sent to

Hasina through jail authorities, the

commission gave her five days to

Rahman, who is also the investigation officer (IO) of the Niko graft case against Khaleda, submitted the investigation report to the commission on the last day of the time granted for the submission.

"The investigation report has

been submitted today," Shahidur

Rahman told journalists yesterday

without disclosing the details of it.

Sources in the ACC however said the investigation report proposed for adding the names of nine more persons on the charge sheet as the probe found their culpability in awarding the gas deal to Canadian gas exploration company Niko, by abusing their power. The new nine suspects include detained businessman Giasuddin Al

Mamun, detained former Dhaka

Club president Selim Bhuiyan,

incumbent Joint Secretary to the Law

Ministry Noren Das, and Kamal Uddin Siddique, principal secretary to the then prime minister Khaleda. In the case the accused are alleged of causing a loss of Tk 10,000 crore to the national exchequer by signing

the deal with Niko.

already accused in the first informa-Myanmar rice FROM PAGE 16 Islam presided over the meeting of the committee. The committee, known as Cabinet Purchase Committee, also gave the nod to another proposal

placed by the LGRD ministry to

appoint a consultant for

Chittagong Wasa's Karnaphuli

During the investigation the IO

questioned four out of the five

Cooperation (JBIC) will finance the However, four other proposals, Andre Nel is thinking of quitting placed by different ministries, were withdrawn from the meeting. Among them was a proposal

placed by the Power Division to

appoint Indian BHEL as a turnkey

contractor to build a 150 MW

a proposal that recommended

capacity of a ministry to Tk 40 crore

from the existing Tk 25 crore.

power plant in Sylhet.

Mirza Aziz said the authorities Shakib Al Hasan, Rokibul Hasan, concerned were asked to place the proposal again after having the approval of an inter-ministerial meeting. LGRD ministry for earth-filling

work at Uttara housing project and

and in addition he also interrogated other persons of relevant ministries. The IO questioned Khaelda on March 6, prompting her to say that she personally did not violate any rule of business while her government signed the deal with Niko.

tion report (FIR) including Khaleda,

prime minister, Khaleda was also the chief of the energy ministry, so the responsibility of the ministry signing any deal, ultimately falls on her The ACC also questioned three

questioned a number of bureaucrats of different ministries in connection with the high profile case, and seized relevant files and documents during the investigation. ACC Deputy Director Sabbir Hasan filed the case against Hasina on December 9 while Assistant

Resources Bangladesh Ltd Kashem

The commission in addition

Sharif is currently in hiding.

SA Samad, former energy secretaries Dr Towfig -e- Elahi Chowdhury and M Akmal Hossain, former Petro Bangla chairman Mosharraf

spot after failing to take a single wicket and Rajshahi's Forhad is likely to play his first game of the The pressure will be on captain Mohammad Ashraful after a fourth ball duck in the second match at the same venue two days ago.

international cricket after being left out of the squad that tour India later this month. Whether Nel plays today is uncertain but South Africa still have options in Dale Steyn, playerof-the-series in the 2-0 Test white-

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Abdur Razzak, Syed Rasel. Another proposal placed by the SOUTH AFRICA (likely): Graeme

Mymensingh Sadar, Muktagachha, Phulbaria, and Shahjahanpur.

voter registration centres. Voters can file objections and

the objections and claims. The EC decided to assign upazila executive officers with the revision job in upazilas while deputy election commissioners, additional deputy commissioners, additional district magistrates and cantonment execu-

Khaleda also told the investigation team that she personally did not even sign on the final agreement

between her government and the

however said besides being the

Experts in the energy ministry

Canadian company.

shoulder. other defendants in the case -- former energy secretary Shahidul Islam, detained former law minister Moudud Ahmed, and detained former state minister for energy AKM Mosharraf Hossain at jail gates. Another defendant in the case Vicepresident (South Asia) of Niko

Director Mahbubul Alam filed the case against Khaleda on the same day with Tejgaon police station. The co-defendants of currently detained Awami League President Sheikh Hasina are -- detained former state minister for energy Rafiqul Islam, former principal secretary to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) Dr

Hossain, and Vice-president (South Aisa) of Niko Research Bangladesh Ltd Kashem Sharif.

Final ODI today

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For the visitors, it will be a big opportunity to go past Australia in the ICC one-day rankings as they water supply project involving Tk need to win this game as well to oust the world champions from Japan Bank for International their place. But tension is brewing among the Proteas' ranks after it was learned that their paceman

The Cabinet Division withdrew wash, and Morne Morkel. TEAMS increasing the financing approval BANGLADESH (likely): Tamim Iqbal, Shahriar Nafees,

Mohammad Ashraful (captain),

Nazimuddin, Dhiman Ghosh

(wicketkeeper), Forhad Reza,

Smith (captain), Herschelle Gibbs. Hashim Amla, AB de Villiers (wicketkeeper), Jean-Paul Duminy,