



The Council of Ministers met on Monday at Bangabhaban with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the Chair.

—PID photo

Obhi's associate held for collecting tolls from shops

By DU Correspondent

Police arrested Nurul Islam Babu, a student of Dhaka University and an associate of Obhi-Niru group Monday from Shahbagh area for alleged involvement in collecting tolls from nearby shops.

Babu, who was also the Vice President of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall Students Union was first caught by the shopkeepers and some activists of JCD.

Later they handed him over to the nearby Police Control Room.

Nurul Islam Babu was staying out of the campus since November last year for his involvement with Obhi-Niru group.

IMF agreement

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Board of governors of the IMF.

The amendment aims at taking appropriate measures against defaulting member states. The measures include debarment of the defaulting member-state from voting on policy matters, suspension of further financial aid to it, withdrawal from IMF of persons nominated by it and, in certain cases, even cancellation of membership.

The Council also agreed in principle to accept the proposal made by the Board of Governors of the IMF for increasing the quota of the member-states. Appropriate amendments in the International Financial Organisation Order 1972 are expected to be brought about in due course, the council observed.

The Council of Ministers approved a new set of principles for leasing out ferry ghats and ferry points under the control of the IWT. These ghats and points, except four of them, would henceforth be leased out through sealed open tender. There would be provision for submitting tenders in more than one office. The lessee must publicly display the chart of fare. Any incidence of charging fare at a rate higher than the prescribed ones may lead to cancellation of these lease.

There would be three categories of ghats and points — ghats and points for which the lease amount would be Taka five lakh or more would fall in category 'A' those for which the lease amount would be Taka two lakh or more, but less than Taka five lakh would fall in category 'B' and the rest in category 'C'.

RAJUK plots

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negative. He however, said that 49 persons were allotted plots under rule 13A of 1986.

According to this rule, plots may be allotted to persons who have remarkable contributions in government and public services and in such other fields of national importance as the government may determine from time to time.

In reply to another question whether the government has any plan to cancel those allotments, the state minister said that it could be done if permitted by law.

Those who got allotment of plots at the Gulshan Model Town are: Mohammad Yakub Sattar, Begum Nafiza Islam, Dr. M. Rafiquzzaman, Mrs. Srah Begum Kobori, Tozammel Huq, Mrs. Rana Yasmeen Manzoor, Mrs. Sima Hossain, Mrs. Amatun Noor Begum, Major A.F.M. Kamrul Hasan, Bakhtiar Ahmed Khan, Toab Khan, Kazi Zafar Ahmed, Lt. Col. Sharif Aziz, PSC, A.B.M. Ruhul Amin Howladar, Mrs. Sultana Rezwan, Lt. Col. Anwarul Alam, Kazi Salahuddin, Shahadat Chowdhury, Mrs. Laila Siddiqi, M.A. Samad, Mrs. Selina Saber, S.H.B. Noor Chowdhury, Al-Mahmud, Fazal Shahabuddin, Abdul Qudus Makhani, Hasnir

Severest cyclone

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cas like Pathargata trawlers were used to evacuate people to safety.

The Bhola district control room told The Daily Star that tidal surge overflowed a ten-foot coastal embankment in Manpara upazila.

People living inside the embankment started leaving the place following this.

In Moheshkhali, the coastal embankment was breached by the fury of storm surge in Dhalghat union. About 600 families who lived in thatched houses on the embankment became shelterless.

The upazila of Tajumuddin, some areas of Char Fashon, Char Zahiruddin, Goal Char, and Char Kukri Mukri were severely affected by the cyclone and its accompanying storm surge.

The Manpara upazila has been submerged by the surge. A large number of schools and dwellings have been damaged, according to preliminary reports.

In Patuakhali the worst hit areas are Char Gangat, Char Biswas, Char Montaj, Char Kajal and Char Pukur.

One person was reported killed in Galachipa following a chest injury he received during the storm. The district control room said they knew about the injury of a man.

Patuakhali district administration sources said they could not give details about the extent of damage because they could not go out due to the storm.

Met employees at the Khepupara Radar Station reported at around 8 pm Monday that they could not go outside

Hasina: Relief

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Coming out from an emergency meeting of the Awami League Parliamentary Party (ALPP) at the Sangsad Bhaban, Sheikh Hasina told BSS that we all, irrespective of party, should engage ourselves unitedly to the task of mitigating sufferings of the people affected by the calamity. She hoped that Almighty Allah would help us.

The emergency meeting, she said, discussed the cyclone situation.

The Leader of the Opposition urged the government to take all measures on a war footing to save lives and property in the coastal areas.

Sheikh Hasina said she had talked to the administration of several coastal districts where cyclonic storm had already started hitting in the evening.

Pact on US bases soon

MANILA, Apr 29: The United States calling for an end to heated polemics and exaggerated rhetoric in talks with Manila, said today it hoped to hammer out agreement this week on its military bases in the Philippines, reports Reuters.

Khaleda may visit S. Arabia in May

Star Report

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia is likely to visit Saudi Arabia in the middle of May.

An invitation by the Saudi government is being carried to her by a special Saudi envoy, who was a former Saudi ambassador to Bangladesh, reliable sources said.

This would be her first foreign visit as the Prime Minister.

Begum Zia, accompanied by other high officials, is also likely to make a brief visit to Kuwait on her way back.

Sources close to the Prime Minister also said that she is likely to address the 46th United Nations General Assembly in September.

The Foreign Minister will lead the Bangladesh delegation to the United Nations.

'One third of budget from own resources'

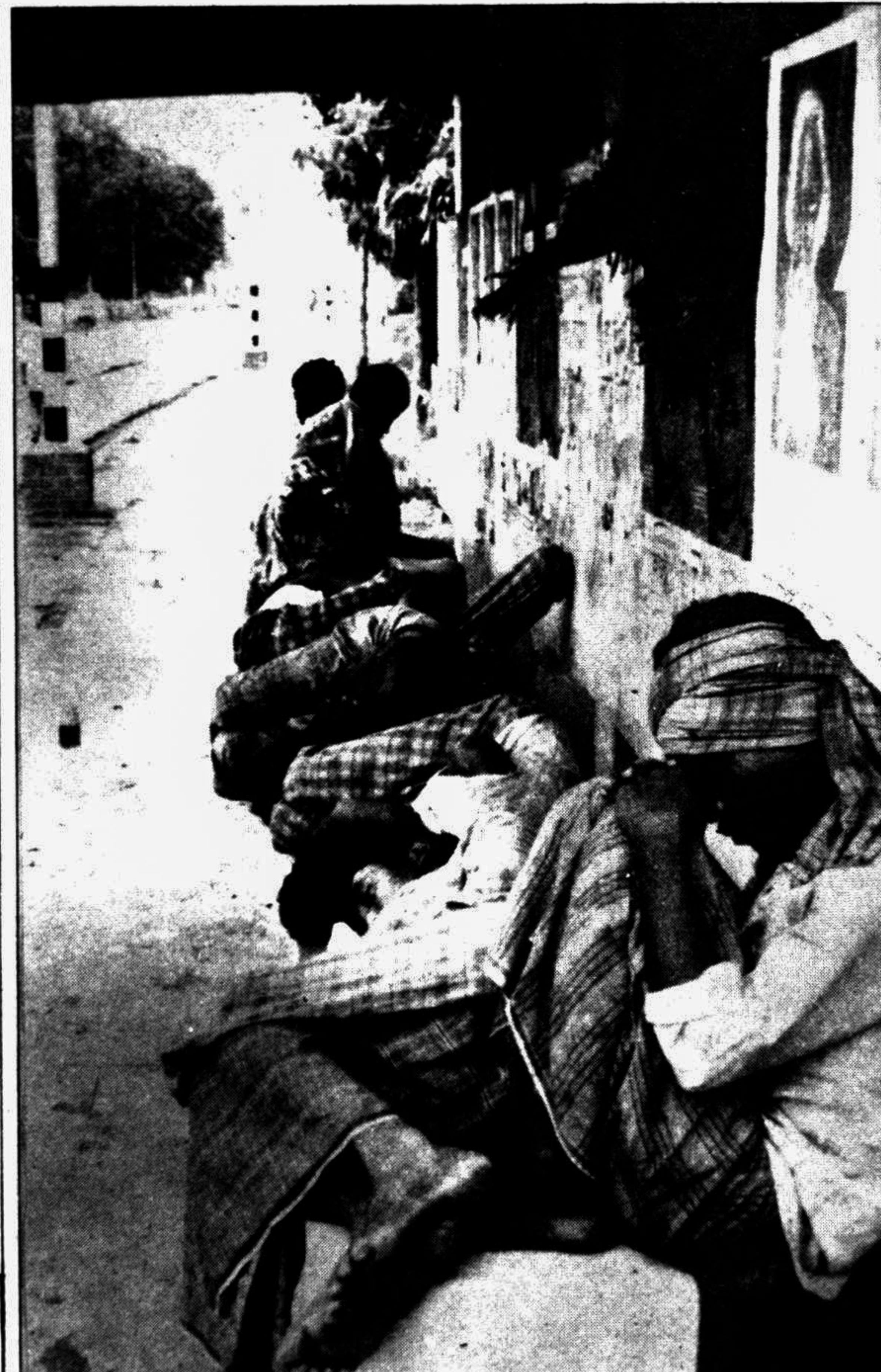
VANCOUVER (Canada), Apr 29: Finance and Planning Minister M. Saifur Rahman said the target of his government was to have one-third of the development budget financed from its own resources by 1995, reports BSS.

Wind and rain in city

By Staff Correspondent

Dhaka city experienced rainfall accompanied with gusty and squally wind from Monday afternoon under the impact of the cyclonic storm that crossed the Chittagong Cox's Bazar coast last night.

The intensity of rainfall and wind was steadily increasing till our going to press in the early hours of today (Tuesday).



UNDER SHELTER: Rain and wind due to the impact of the cyclone compelled many people to take refuge under wayside sheds in the city yesterday.

Worst in 20 years

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widely alluvial and low-lying. Incoming storm-induced waves are pressed into the funnel-shaped Bay of Bengal.

The large expanse of shallow water overlying the continental shelf, and the 10-to-18-foot high astronomical tidal range from the east to the west coastline add to raise the storm induced sea level.

This cyclone was more worse than the cyclone of Nov 28, 1988 that hit the Khulna region. About 4,000 people were counted killed and 6000 were listed missing. Damage to crops and houses was colossal.

Another major cyclone hit Bangladesh on May 25, 1985.

Thousands of inhabitants of Urrichar were washed away by the storm surge of that cyclone. The death toll was 10,000.

Records show that November 12, 1970 cyclone had caused storm surges between 10 to 33 feet.

There were two severe cyclones in the year 1965. A total of 19,270 people including 14,193 were killed in Barisal alone in a cyclone that hit on the night of May 11.

Another cyclone hit the Cox's Bazar-Teknaf coasts killing about 1000 people on December 14 the same year.

A total of 11,520 people were killed in a cyclone that crossed the Chittagong-Cox's Bazar coasts on May 28, 1963.

The maximum windspeed was 125 miles per hour in Chittagong and 102 miles per hour in Cox's Bazar during that cyclone.

On May 9, 1961 a cyclone hit the Meghna estuary killing 11,468 people. The maximum windspeed was 90 to 92 miles per hour.

In 1960 another cyclone hit Chittagong with a maximum windspeed of 125 miles per hour. A total of 8,149 people

were killed in that cyclone on October 30.

Over 3000 people were killed in yet another cyclone in the Meghna estuary on October 9, 1960.

A cyclone hit Chittagong in October 1897 sweeping away 14,000 people. Another 18,000 people died in a subsequent epidemic.

Another cyclone that hit the Meghna estuary in October 1876 caused enormous loss in life and property. The storm surge was as high as 45 feet. The number of deaths was, however, not recorded.

In 1822, 40,000 people were killed and one lakh heads of cattle lost in a severe cyclone that hit Barisal in May.

AL Bill

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the issue on May 1, has deferred the meeting due to the emergency arising out of the cyclone.

BNP is also contemplating a dialogue between the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition on this issue.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia may invite Sheikh Hasina and other opposition members of Parliament before the conclusion of the current session to a Eid reunion function, which may open the door for series of meetings between the two major parties.

There exist differences of opinion among the BNP leaders over the form of government. While some of them favour the parliamentary form, there are others who would like to see the continuation of the present presidential system, albeit by conceding more powers to the Jatiya Sangsad.

Sources close to the BNP chairperson said she had not yet decided her course of action and she might invite open discussion on the issue at the BNP PP meeting to be held at a convenient time.

BNP MP Lt Col (ret'd) Akbar Hossain raised the issue in the last meeting of the BSSPP. But the issue was dropped without elaborate discussion. Akbar said the co-unity was confronting three burning issues — political, law and order and economic. He said without resolving the political issue the two other issues could not be settled.

He said, of late, there has been a growing tendency among certain sections of the people to believe that the existing presidential system breeds autocracy. He pointed to the bad experience under nine years' misrule by the Ershad regime.

But Akbar also condemned Awami League's unilateral move to change the form of government by saying "It is nothing but a political stunt, as the party has not bothered to explore the possibility of a dialogue with BNP on this matter."

He said BNP also could discuss the Constitution amendment bill to be brought by the Awami League and take steps to place a bill with similar purpose by the treasury bench after reaching a national consensus. He also said that he danger of floor crossing by the MPs in a parliamentary system could be restrained by another amendment to the Constitution.

Political observers said that if would be difficult for BNP to go for any sort of amendments to the Constitution without a consensus among all the parties. Because without the support of Awami League BNP will require the support of both Jatiya Party and Jamaat to amend the Constitution. But any amendment by BNP keeping the form of government as it is now will not get support either from Awami League or from Jamaat.

Meanwhile the small parties which are in favour of a consensus between Awami League and BNP alleged that Awami League did not want to share the credit of changing the form of government with any other party. Awami League has already rejected a proposal to form a committee to negotiate with BNP this issue.

JSD leader Shahjahan Straj told The Daily Star that the unilateral decision of Awami League might jeopardise the fate of the bill proposed for changing the form of government.

After the meeting, the top guerrilla leader, identified only as Gen. Ali, was taken by US forces to one of the main checkpoints

The Midnight File

UN for referendum in W. Sahara

NEW YORK (United Nations), Apr 29: The UN Security Council Monday voted to form a mission to organize a referendum on self-determination in the western Sahara. Resolution 690 was passed unanimously by the 15-member council in an effort to bring an end to the 15-year war between Morocco and the Polisario Front over the western Sahara, reports AFP.

Honecker back in hospital

BERLIN, Apr 29: Former East German leader Erich Honecker is back in Moscow, living like a prisoner in a luxurious apartment in a military hospital, the Bild newspaper reported Monday, reports AP.

David Lean's last film cancelled

PARIS, Apr 29: The 44-million-dollar blockbuster film "Nostramo," British director David Lean's last work, has been cancelled due to his death. French producer Serge Silbermann announced Monday. The film, starring Dennis Quaid, Isabella Rossellini and Christopher Lambert, was based on the Joseph Conrad's novel about the exploits of an Italian adventurer in the late 1800s, reports AP.

Big Five talk police guard for Kurds

UNITED NATIONS, Apr 29: The five permanent members of the Security Council today considered a British proposal that the United Nations send a police force to guard Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq once allied troops leave. But diplomats from the five — the United States, Britain, France, the Soviet Union and China — said a Security Council resolution was not being considered at this stage, reports Reuters.

No plan to fix minimum prices for raw jute

Star Economic Report

State Minister for Jute Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan told the Jatiya Sangsad (parliament) Monday the government had no plan to fix minimum prices for raw jute during the current season.

Replying to a question from Kh. M. Shaheedul Islam Bachchu (Kurigram-1), the State Minister said the price of jute depends on production and demand, both domestic and external.

He observed it was not possible to ensure minimum statutory prices for raw jute at the growers level because of "middlemen" operations between the growers and the actual users. The sales and purchases should be left to a free inter-play of market forces on demand and supply sides.

The State Minister in reply to another question from Principal M. M. Nazrul Islam (Bhola-4), said raw jute exports between July 1 and April 21 in fiscal 1990-91 totalled 13.54 lakh bales. He stated that quantum of raw jute exports stood at 20.64 lakh bales in 1989-90. Exports were 26.62 lakh bales in 1973-74 and 15.49 lakh bales in 1974-75, he added.

Answering a question from Col. (ret'd) Shaikat Ali (Shariatpur-2), Abdul Mannan

Present form of govt can't fulfil hopes: Jamaat

By Staff Correspondent

Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh Monday said it was the responsibility of all parties, especially the ruling party, to bring necessary amendment in the Constitution for opening the path to parliamentary democracy.

The second day of the meeting of Jamaat Central Majlis Shura asked the 5th Jatiya Sangsad to play a vital role in giving institutional shape to the accountable democratic system which has been flourish him in the country after a fair and peaceful election.

The meeting viewed that the present presidential form of government could not fulfil the hopes and aspirations of the people and achieve the goal of democratic movement.

The Jamaat meeting urged all parties to play positive role in amending the Constitution by sinking party interest. It said it is possible to carry out a concerted effort on the question of form of government.

The meeting asked all members of parliament (MPs) to work for political stability.

The meeting felt it was easy for dictatorship to thrive in the present Constitution because the same person is the head of the state and the government. The tenure of the National Parliament depends on his will and the ministers are mere advisers under him, the meeting said.

Kurdish guerillas

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headquarters in Zakho with British, Dutch and French military officials and about a dozen leaders of the Iraqi Kurdish guerillas. He said the guerillas, known as the Peah Merga, or "those who face death," were refusing to let Kurds return to Iraq, apparently because they did not believe safety was assured.

After the meeting, the top guerrilla leader, identified only as Gen. Ali, was taken by US forces to one of the main checkpoints

Hasina resents pressure for CU VC's resignation

Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina expressed her grave concern over the pressure being put from a powerful quarter for the resignation of the Chittagong University Vice Chancellor Prof. Alamgir Mohammed Strajuddin, reports BSS.

Jamuna Bridge

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tion work of the flood control embankment-cum-road on the eastern bank of the river Jamuna began on January 14,

1991 as a part of the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Project.

He told the House that earthwork on the eight-kilometre road was in progress. But, he added that work on the main part of the project like the bridge, guide embankment and approach roads on both banks of the river had not yet begun.

Replying to a supplementary question from Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim (Gopalganj-2) the Communications Minister said, construction of the bridge project would involve a total cost of Taka 2500.90 crore including Taka 1603.80 crore in foreign exchange.

Answering another supplementary question, Oli Ahmed told the House that the bridge would initially have four lanes for motor vehicles. Rail tracks would be laid later on one of its four lanes, he added.

Dhaka-Chittagong Highway

The Communications Minister informed the House that the development work on the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway would be completed by June 1991. He was replying to a question from Salauddin Kamran (Noakhali-9).

Editor: S. M. Ali