The Daily Star

DHAKA TUESDAY JUNE 2, 1992

Defence mauls PW in Janata Tower case

Certain questions by the defence counsel on his private life made the prosecution witness K Z Islam jittery during cross-examination Monday in the Janata Tower case involving former president Ershad but Attorney General advised him to remain calm, reports UNB.

"I'm to assail his character," defence counsel Khandokar Mahbub Hossain said when Attorney General Aminul Haq raised objection to certain questions to the prosecution witness.

"But it has to be relevant in the case," argued Aminul Haq.

Defence counsel questioned the witness : When did you started exchanging heart and mind with Khadiza Islam, wife of Elahi, whom you married later . . . if she had divorced her husband before giving her hand to you . . . if you have enticed other's wife to marry you . . etc.

Questions of his private life apparently made the witness annoyed and provoked him to argue. But quick came the Attorney: "No, you won't enter into any debate with lawyers, they are very powerful in the court."

The defence counsel cautioned the witness : There may be many more unpleasant questions . . . prosecution has told you one side of the coin.

"I'm ready to face any question, because I shall not deviate from the truth," answered K Z Islam.

Islam, Managing Director of Nirman International, had undertaken construction of the Janata Tower building at Kawran Bazar for which, he told the court, he received Tk 10 crore from Ershad and Begum Rawshan Ershad.

Ershads were prosecuted for illegally acquiring Kawran Bazar land and thus inflicting a loss of over Tk 5 crore to RAJUK and payment of Tk 6.5 crore to constructors of Janata Tower from their possession which is beyond known sources of their income.

Ershad's lifelong income was established at around Tk 73 lakh in an earlier case which earned him 3 years imprisonment.

The prosecution witness faced a volley of questions on his indenting business and performance of Nirman International of which he became Managing Director in 1987. This company has taken lease of 1.5 bigha land in Tejgaon Industrial Area from the government.

Islam said he has no property in his name -- all are in the name of Nirman International.

He said he has given up indenting business 4/5 years back.

Defence cross-examination will continue tomorrow (Tuesday).

Gunbattle: Badre Alam College closed

From Our Correspondent

GAZIPUR, June 1: Authorities Monday shut down the Bhawal Badre Alam Government College for 16 days from tomorrow (Tuesday) following a gunfight on the campus and other parts of the town by a section of pro-government students.

Witnesses said that a group of armed activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) attacked the students of the Badre Alam College at about 11 am Monday.

They opened blank fires with sawed-up weapons and set off at least 25 crude bombs to create panic on the campus, the witnesses said.

Thousands of students started running at all directions following the incident.

The activists of other student organisations including the Ganatantrik Chhatra Oikya (GCO) then grouped and resisted the attack in which at least 15 students were injured.

The injured were admitted to the Gazipur Hospital while Humayun Kabir Raju a JCD activist and degree student of the college, was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

The rampaging JCD activists also attacked the emergency department of the Gazipur hospital alleging delay in shifting of their activist. Gazipur district BMA president Dr Sohrabuzzaman was injured in the incident.

The activists, then, staged a demonstration in front of the Deputy Commissioners office and smashed four cars parked there.

The JCD workers also attacked the local Awami League office at Battala and set afire the Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) office at Shibbari crossing of the town.

JCD and the GCO held separate protest rallies at Battala and Chandana crossing respectively in the town alleging one another for terrorising the college campus.

Heavy contingent of police have been deployed at the campus.

Raise in tea exports can reduce trade gap : Pak HC

By Staff Correspondent

Pakistan High Commissioner in Dhaka, Anwar Kemal, has said that Bangladesh can reduce the trade gap between the two countries by raising tea exports.

Speaking on "Economic and Commercial Cooperation between Pakistan and Bangladesh" yesterday at the regular weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhaka North, the High Commissioner said that there were ample "potentials" to improve the existing trade relations.

Bangladesh buys mainly rice and raw cotton from Islamabad while Pakistan's prime imports from Dhaka are jute and tea.

In recent years, tea exports to Pakistan have drastically declined.

Kemal suggested cooperation in garments and textile sectors saying that Dhaka could use Pakistan's textile machinery and raw cotton for these industries.

Pakistan is to hold a trade fair in Dhaka late this month which the High Commissioner said would be Pakistan's first single exhibition in any country.

5-Party condemns 'police torture' of Fattah

By Staff Correspondent

The Five-party alliance yesterday strongly condemned 'police torture' of Ganatantrik Chhatra Kendra worker Abul Fattah and his family members.

Members of the alliance's central steering committee, at a meeting in the city, alleged that police arrested Fattah, also an activist of the Ekatturer Ghatak-Dalal Nirmul Committee, on the basis of a 'false' statement made to the police by a Kamrul-led Sarbahara Party activist, Bidhan alias Bachchu.

Bidhan made the statement after being arrested at Khansama upazila of Dinajpur district recently.

Chaired by the Convenor of the alliance, Nayeem Jahangir, the meeting also alleged that police tortured Fattah's younger brother, Abdul Jabbar after taking him into custody.

The meeting firmly denied Fattah and Jabbar's involvement with the Sarbahara Party and demanded immediate withdrawal of the 'false 'cases filed against them. It was claimed that they were activists of the five-party alliance.

The meeting also demanded the arrest of all associates of Bidhan and to stop harassing Fattah and his family members.

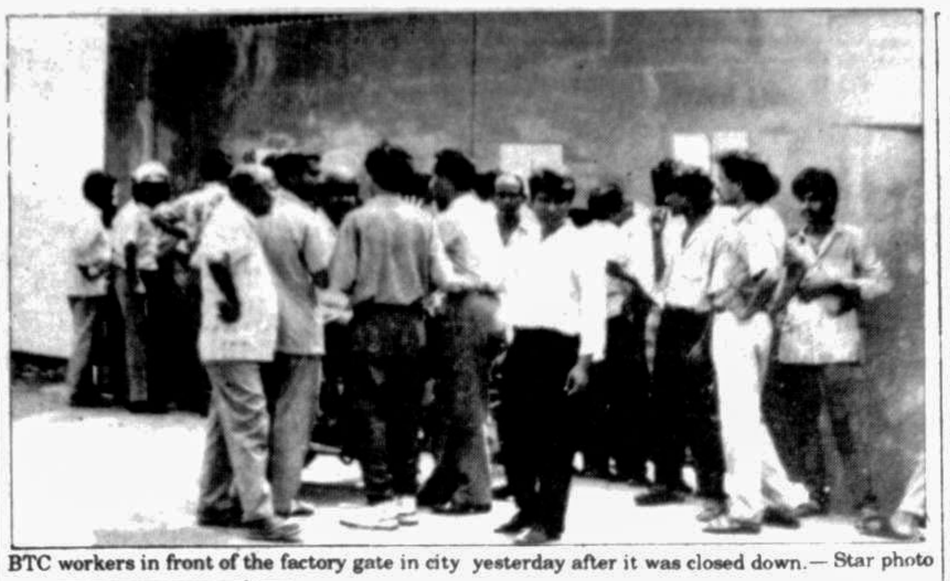
BCL (M-I) leader arrested

KISHOREGANJ, May 31: Police arrested Mahmudul Hasan Liton, ex-general secretary of Gurudayal College Students Union and organising secretary of Kishoreganj district unit of Chhatra League (M-I), from the town today

Janata Party's fresh plea

SILIGURI, June 1: The Janata Party today demanded the transfer of Dahagram and Angorpota enclaves of Bangladesh to India as a 'permanent and practical solution' of the Tinbigha issue, reports PTI.

Editor: S. M. Ali
Executive Editor: Mahfuz Anam
Published by S. M. Ali on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000 and printed by him at Offset Printing Dialogue Publications Ltd., 19 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: 28/1, Toynbee Circular Road, Dhaka-1000. Tel: PABX- 246023—4, 245061—2. Advertisement: 245063 & Ext. 20. Fax No. 88-02-863035. GPO Box No. 3257. GRAM: DAILY STAR, DHAKA.



BTC workers in front of the factory gate in city yesterday after it was closed down.— Star photo

Dhaka imposes sanction on Serbia, Montenegro

The government has decided to impose sanctions on Serbia and Montenegro of the former federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia in compliance with an United Nations Security Council resolution, according to official sources in Dhaka yesterday, reports BSS.

The sanctions, imposed by Bangladesh, included inter-alia, ban on all trade and air traffic and movement to and form Yugoslavia, excepting humanitarian cases, suspension of sports and cultural link and scientific and technical exchanges with these two countries, the sources said.

The UN Security Council has adopted a resolution on Sunday imposing sanctions on Serbia and Montenegro.

Meanwhile, the sources said, the Yugoslav mission here is in the process of being wound up and at present only one diplomat is posted here.

Security Press

From Page 1 Col 8

press, had ordered to lay off the press with an aim to hoodwink the people and divert workers and employees' attention from his corruption, malpractice and other financial irregularities.

He also demanded removal of the General Manager Khan Abdus Sobhan and Assistant Security Officer Badruddin Ahmed.

Mahmud said that the present situation in the press premises was calm and the workers had returned to their quarters.

He resented the arrest order of the leaders of the union and workers of the press saying that failure of some high officials in handling the situation had created such situation.

Authorities Saturday announced to shut down the press for an indefinite period on grounds of security, continued violence and labour unrest.

Earlier on May 27 the administration shut off the press for three days following a manhandling of the General Manager of the press on May 26 by a group of local people.

A case was filed against 13 employees of the press which immediately sparked off furor among the workers.

The employees of the press were divided into two groups who began fighting each other. A tense situation prevailed at the press premises while the employees and their families left the residential areas.

The MD and the GM tendered their resignations following the incident.

However, at a tripartite meeting between the press management, the employees and the district administration on Saturday, the workers submitted a memorandum along with a 23-point charter of demands.

BTC shuts factory

From Page 1 Col 7

started, the workers instigated by "a handful of workers" refused to join duties.

Fry said that after issuing notice of appeal to the strikers to join duties twice, the authority finally closed down the factory.

The PMD is the section where tobacco is processed for use in the cigarette making machine. As the PMD became idle, the whole factory was paralysed.

BTC officials said that the closure was necessary to avert any sabotage by the striking workers. The BTC management categorically said that the workers could join duties anytime and pointed out that the authorities would never give in to the demands of the "illegal strikers."

BTC officials said that the reduction in casual workers was needed for the balancing, modernisation, rehabilitation and expansion (BMRE) of the factory. However, they said that this did not affect the permanent employees and added that more permanent workers were appointed at the factory last month.

The authorities said that the CBA was working to help the management. They hinted that a section of the workers opposed to the CBA had created the crisis for its gains over the coming CBA election in July.

The authorities said that the present stock of cigarettes might last for another three weeks and acknowledged that the shutdown of operations would push up cigarette prices.

BTC mainly produces Gold Leaf, State Express 555, Star and Scissors brands of cigarettes.

The authorities said that the closure came after a record production this month. They said the sale of BTC items was increasing sharply this year compared to the previous year's.

They said in the four months of 1991, BTC sold 27 million sticks of 555 and 457 million sticks of Gold Leaf while it sold 99 million sticks of 555 and 765 million sticks of Gold Leaf during the same period in 1992.

BTC projected that it would pay Taka 580 crore as revenue to the government exchequer this year as against Taka 507 crore last year.

The BTC management said that it had paid the wages along with Eid bonus to the workers this month and declared that the company would not pay any wages to the workers for the closure period. It also indicated that disciplinary action may be taken against the striking workers.

Meanwhile, the Vice President of the BTC Workers Employees Union, Md Shamsuddin talking to the Daily Star said that his organisation fully supports the agreement and the crisis was created by a section of workers opposed to the present CBA.

When asked if the closure of the BTC would increase smuggling, the MD answered in the affirmative and said that the recent anti-smuggling drive had cut down smuggling by about 20 per cent.

BTC earlier closed down its other factory at Chittagong on December 7 as the plant had become unprofitable.

Production Director, R Accorda, Corporate Affairs Manager, R A Majumder and personnel operations manager, K A Islam assisted the BTC MD at his press conference.

Viability of Osmania Glass Factory project questioned

An ECNEC decision giving go-ahead to the delayed BMRE of Osmania Glass Factory has offended the Industries Ministry which requested the authorities to revoke it.

Sources at the Industries Ministry told UNB that the ministry in a letter to the Finance Ministry Monday questioned viability of the project and requested a review of the decision.

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council took the decision on May 20 for BMRE of the factory using a Belgian grant amounting to Tk 24 crore.

Though the grant was made in 1988, its utilisation has been much delayed to the resentment of the donor which threatened to withdraw the sanction of money.

Now the industries Ministry contends that the decision for balancing, modernisation, rehabilitation and expansion of the factory was based on wrong information.

The Planning Commission's estimate of 10 per cent internal interest on the grant will have negative impact on the company, which has 38 per cent share in the private sector, the ministry said.

"The rate of interest on the credit should be in favour of the company," the letter said suggesting refixation of interest at 2.5 per cent.

Venting similar concern, the BCIC Chairman has contradicted the fixation of rate of return by the Planning Commission, saying the factory will not be able to sustain competition in the market.

Sources at the Finance Ministry, however, said there was no chance of backout from the decision as all information had been scrutinised beforehand.

On completion of the planned BMRE, the factory, an enterprise of the Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation, is expected to earn foreign exchange by exporting glass sheets of different categories to neighbouring countries after meeting domestic demand.

Election fever grips JU

By JU Correspondent

Colourful posters, festoons, banners and pageant of the aspirant candidates and their enthusiastic supporters Monday marked the final hours of electioneering for the JUCSU polls.

All the participating organisations were seen busy campaigning for the Jahangirnagar University Central Students Union (JUCSU) and hall union polls, scheduled to be held on Wednesday, June 3.

The dateline for electioneering terminated midnight Monday.

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), Ganotantrik Chhatra Oikya (GCO), Bangladesh Chhatra League BCL (M-I) brought out colourful processions on the campus Monday to drum up support.

JCD, surpassed all by staging the biggest showdown. Starting from the central cafeteria the rally ended in the Arts Faculty premises.

At a meeting after the rally, the JCD leaders highlighted their electoral pledges and campaigned for the Liton-Mithu-Badol panel.

GCO, an alliance of four left-leaning student organisations, campaigned for the Shyamol-Kapil- Mukta panel.

The Awami League-backed BCL (M-I) put up the Mohibullah-Mitu-Sarwar panel.

Jatiya Chhatra Dal, another contestant of JUCSU polls, campaigned for their Syeef-Asad-Shamim panel.

A total of 68 candidates are vying for the 16 posts of the JUCSU while 194 nomination papers were found valid by the Election Commission for the 91 posts of the seven hall unions of the university.

Earlier, 14 contestants of the hall unions were elected unopposed. The elected are members of JCD.

The Election Commission has deployed police forces on the campus to ensure peaceful polling. Admittance of vehicles and persons without proper permission have been restricted on the campus. The election will continue without break from 9 am to 3 pm Wednesday.

Meanwhile, GCO in a programme Monday evening introduced their panel with Shyamol Kanti Chowdhury as VP, Kazi Afzal Hossain Kapil as GS, Ziaul Haq Mukta as AGS, Ragibul Haq Ragib as Commonroom Secretary, Saleha Islam Moni as Female Commonroom Secretary, Sarwar Hossain as Literary Secretary, Anik Asad as Social Recreation Secretary, Rashed Ahmed as Drama Secretary, Faizul Haq Mamun as Sports Secretary, Niloy as Asstt Sports Secretary, and Palash, Shipu, Safi, and Ehsan as members.

Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (SCF) President Belal Chowdhury, and GS of Bangladesh Students Union Ruhin Ahmed Prince attended the panel introduction ceremony.

Mantu

From Page 1 Col 7

the Savanetri, Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina. "I'll not say a single word about the daughter of Bangabandhu."

But he said some leaders who had done politics all along against Awami League and Bangabandhu joined the party with a motive to liquidate it. He named Begum Matia Chowdhury as one of them.

"Matia Chowdhury had gathered experience of how to break a party as she had done while in Chhatra Union and NAP," Mantu said, adding she had also supported the 19-point programme of the Zia government.

Another report says: Supporters of expelled Awami League leader Mostafa Mohsin Mantu Monday staged demonstration outside the National Press Club protesting the expulsion of their leader.

A press release issued by Muklesur Rahman on behalf of pro-Mantu Dhaka district Awami League said the demonstration was addressed by Jamal Uddin Ahmed, Abdul Jabbar, Shahjahan Saju, Saifuddin Ahmed, Nur Mohammad Sharifi and Yusuf Ali Chowdhury Selim. Siraj-uddin Ahmed presided.

The speakers expressed their condemnation at the expulsion of Mantu and said the decision as "completely unconstitutional".

Terming the decision as "inhuman" they said it was the result of a conspiracy by a vicious quarter.

They also appealed to Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina and the central working committee to withdraw the expulsion immediately and allow Mantu to work for the implementation of ideals of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Meanwhile, the pre-council meeting of the central working committee of Awami League continued its deliberation for the fourth day yesterday.

Party chief Sheikh Hasina chaired the meeting which approved 15 newly elected district committees of the party, said a press release.

Split into two sittings, it also discussed the draft manifesto and some amendments to party's constitution.

The meeting, attended by all the 47 members of the central committee, was adjourned till 10 am today.

Gas supply

From Page 1 Col 5

The government has already increased prices by 10 per cent that took effect May 1. A further 10 per cent rise in rate is almost certain to be proposed in the next budget.

According to the report, the rise in gas rate is needed to "achieve economic efficiency, resource mobilisation and sector development activities."

The report, based on the results of World Bank missions that had been in Bangladesh in May, August and December 1991, also suggests comprehensive institutional and financial performance reforms.

On the institutional reforms, the World Bank calls for increased autonomy for the gas sector entities, while monitoring accountability through performance contracts; the establishment of a single, national gas transmission company out of the three existing companies to "streamline transmission operations and achieve transparency in finances"; the formulation of a national exploration policy and a decision on whether the Bangladesh Exploration Company (BAPEX) should be continued and what its role should be.

The other institutional reforms include "a renewed, vigorous campaign" to promote petroleum exploration with international companies, removal of government representatives from the Boards of the operating companies and a joint energy sector planning by the corporations dealing with power, gas and petroleum products.

On the reforms in financial performance, the report emphasises 'actions' on gas pricing policies, avoidance of excessive levels of long-term debt, the distribution companies' ability to collect their receivables and a sound policy for exploration.

The main objectives of the 'Gas Sector Review for Bangladesh' were to (1) identify the key impediments to the sector's efficient and sustainable development and (2) recommend a monitorable set of priority actions to address these issues.

An estimated 15.2 trillion cubic feet of remaining, recoverable gas reserves, the country's only commercial energy resource, could meet demands of new consumers until 2010 and permit sufficient supplies to meet total requirements for about 60 years.

The Bengal Delta basin which underlies most of Bangladesh is gas-prone, offering significant potential for increasing known gas reserves and finding new gas.

The Midnight File

Ghali may relaunch peace plan in Western Sahara

UNITED NATIONS, June 1: UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali is considering relaunching a UN peace plan in Western Sahara, despite repeated violations of a ceasefire there. In a report to the Security Council, Boutros-Ghali praised Morocco and the Polisario Front for agreeing to restart negotiations aimed at allowing the former Spanish colony to determined its own future, reports AFP.

Romanian workers demand elections by July

BUCHAREST, Romania, June 1: About 5,000 workers rallied in downtown Bucharest on Monday to demand general elections be held by July. The workers, who walked off assembly lines in the capital's major engineering and furniture plants, chanted "we want elections immediately." They waved anti-government placards and blocked traffic in downtown Bucharest, reports AP.

Earth summit

From Page 1 Col 4

harming the ecology.

Experts say Bangladesh's large, impoverished and illiterate population is contributing to ecological problems by destroying forests and polluting waters.

The Myanmar refugees and the Biharis are also posing ecological threat to Bangladesh, experts said.

"The refugees are spread over 200 of the 12,000 hectares (495 of the 29,600 acres) of Government forests, besides other woodland, one senior forest officer in Cox's Bazar earlier said.

Indiscriminate use of wood for cooking and shelter would create ecological problems, he said.

"If the refugees stay too long, the entire reserve forest may be destroyed," he added.

The forest destruction continues as more refugees pour in daily.

The poor sanitation conditions, including scattered human excreta in 66 Bihari camps across Bangladesh were a source of disease and pollution, Health officials said, adding that it was similar in Cox's Bazar Rohingya camps.

Dhaka's proposals at the summit will be in line with other Third World countries, including waiver of any "green conditionality" with technology transfer, officials said.

The country paper says Bangladesh "wishes to request that a special environmental fund be attached to all aid projects and be targeted for environmental enhancement."

Bangladesh's major challenges in the environmental sector is water supply and 2.4 per cent annual growth of its population - now standing at 108 million, experts said.

One expert said Bangladesh was a lower riparian country and is vulnerable to quantity and quality of water coming from the upper reaches.

The very low dry season flow of some 57 common rivers was causing fall in surface water level, officials said, adding that experts were of the opinion that it was one of the causes of desertification in northern Bangladesh.

According to the country paper the estimated crude spillage at Chittagong is about 6,000 metric tons annually, while about 240,000 gallons of bilge water is also dumped during the same period. Besides, accidental spillages were also a problem.

The country's largest port — Chittagong Port — handles upto 1,000 ships, including some 50 oil tankers.

The eco-system and the Sundarban mangrove forest were victims of the spillage.

On the summit outcome, however, both officials and experts agreed that it was at least a start to protect the earth and its environment, affecting the poorer countries more severely.

"When it hurts, people behave," BCAS's Rahman added, without elaborating.

BCL feud

From Page 1 Col 8

were brought into the three halls in the last two days despite deployment of a large number of police at all the entry points to the campus.

Most of the residents of the three halls in the meantime left their dormitories due to lack of security. A large number of those who left are examinees of the Honours and Master Degree final examinations scheduled to begin at the end of this month, hall sources said.

The Honours and Master Degree examinees of the university Monday also submitted memorandum to the Pro-Vice Chancellor demanding shifting of their examinations because of the uneasy campus situation.

The campus trouble erupted when the supporters of expelled Awami League leader Mostafa Mohsin Mantu in the Chhatra League ousted their rivals from the Zahurul Huq Hall in sudden armed attack on May 27.

The rival Gopalganj-Barisal group took shelter in S M Hall and Jagannath Hall since then while the Zahurul Huq Hall was still under the control of the 'Mantu group.'

Arafat

From Page 1 Col 7

Jordanian territory, Arafat felt severe pains in his head. He was rushed back to Amman and taken to the hospital where surgery was performed at noon, Ksous and Palestinian officials said.

Palestinian and Jordanian officials said the Jordanian monarch was at the hospital during the surgery and left in the early afternoon after Arafat regained consciousness.

The cause of the ailment was not known, Ksous said when asked if the clot had resulted from bruises Arafat suffered in a plane crash in April. Three crew members were killed in the crash in the Libyan desert.

Arafat has no history of any major diseases.

Trial body

From Page 1 Col 5

Abul Hashem terming it a frame-up and said, "The police harassed the leader by delaying submission of the medical report to the court."

"We hate even to protest such a heinous act of the government," he said.

Col Nuruzzaman warned that the people would foil "any move to save the killers and collaborators of the Liberation War."

Later, a procession paraded the main thoroughfares of the city.

Global jute

From Page 1 Col 7

geted at 3.5 million which is lower than 3.6 million tons produced last year.

The IJO in its report titled "Assessment and Review of World Jute Situation" said there was not adequate rainfall in Bangladesh and India for sowing jute for the year 1992-93 and hence production is expected to be low.

On the other side, in some traditional jute growing areas in Bangladesh there is a tendency to replace jute cultivation with paddy as the price of jute was now less remunerative.

The internal prices of raw jute in Bangladesh which were depressed during October-December, 1991 declined further during January-February this year, the report added.

The prices are still depressed compared to the price of Taka 902 (US$ 25.19) for 100 kg during the period of 1991. But later in December the price showed upward trend.

Besides, world export trade of jute goods declined during 1990/91 and did not show any satisfactory recovery during the first half of 1991/92.

Bangladesh, which is the main producer of jute in the world, exported 285.16 thousand metric tons of jute during July '91 to February '92 as against 288.3000 metric tons exported during the same period last fiscal year.

BJC stock

From Page 1 Col 7

The official speculated that the highest bid in the tender may be lower than the above rates.

A number of foreign and local buyers are expected to participate in the bidding.

When contacted, Chairman of BJC Col (Retd) M Shariful Islam said that an international tender had been floated on Thursday on the order of the ministry to sell more than 192,000 bales of jute. He declined to elaborate.

Jute Minister A S M Hannan Shah told The Daily Star that this was for the first time that the BJC jute was being sold by open tender. It was earlier sold "through negotiation".

He said that the stock would not be exhausted. Only the old stock including jute of the year 1988 would be sold under this tender.

"Possibly, this decision has hurt the interest of somebody, so he or she is trying to find faults in the matter," the minister said adding that "some godowns of the BJC would also be sold soon."