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NEWS BRIEFS

Two PDB officials suspended

CHITTAGONG, Aug 3: Two PDB officials have been suspended on charges of corruption and other irregularities. According to the PDB sources the suspended officials are: Resident Engineer Shafigur Rahman and Metre Reader Jahangir Alam of Choudhagram Power Supply Centre under Chittagong Zone of the Power Development Board, reports UNB.

Arms recovered in Chittagong

CHITTAGONG, Aug 3: Police recovered huge quantities of arms and ammunition from different thanas of the district during the last four months. According to district police today, the recovered arms included 26 lightguns, four foreign revolvers, one foreign pistol, one rifle, 29 pipe guns, six foreign cut-rifles, one SLR, three single barrel guns, 777 rounds of ammunition, two high powered hand bombs and two big daggers. Cases were filed against 44 persons under the Arms Act with different thanas during this period. Highest number of arms were recovered from Raojan thana, reports BSS.

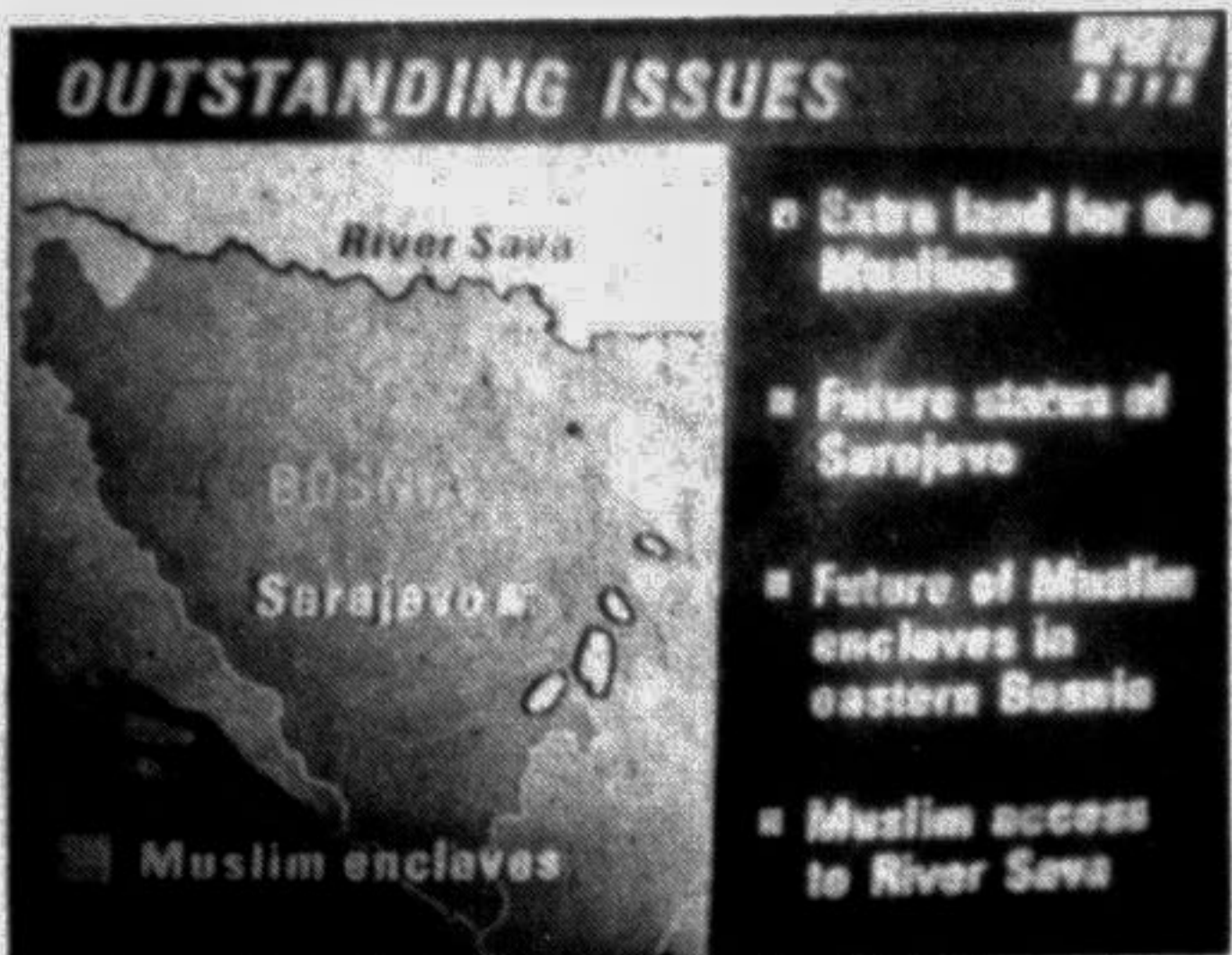
CMC 1st yr classes begin Aug 24

First year MBBS classes for the 1992-93 session of the Comilla Medical College will begin on August 24, reports UNB.

Indian pulse seized

RAJSHAH, Aug 3: A special squad of 20 Rifle Battalion seized 12,000 kilograms of Indian pulse worth over Taka 4 lakh from Sultanganj in Godagary thana of the district Monday, reports UNB.

NATO threatens air strikes against Bosnian Serbs



BRUSSELS, Aug 3: NATO warned early Tuesday that it is preparing to carry out air strikes against Serbs if their 'strangulation' of the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo persists, reports AP.

The NATO declaration came after one of the longest meetings on record of the North Atlantic Council, NATO's political forum.

Ambassadors of the 16 NATO countries wrangled for nearly 12 hours over a US proposal to subject Serb gunners surrounding Sarajevo to the alliance's formidable air power. President Clinton said on Monday that he believed the allies would authorise the American proposal.

The Atlantic alliance said it has decided to make immediate

preparations for undertaking stronger measures including air strikes against those responsible, Bosnian Serbs and others, in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Although the NATO declaration focused mainly on the 16-month-old Serb siege of Sarajevo, the Croats have also come under increasing criticism for atrocities against Muslims.

If NATO ultimately agreed to hit Serb positions from the air, it would mark the first time in the military alliance's history that it undertook an offensive capacity.

Officials said the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation planned to meet again next Monday to hear the recommendations of NATO military advisers on the logistics of protecting

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JMB co-financiers meet in Washington from tomorrow

Star Report

The co-financiers' meeting of the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Project (JMBP) begins tomorrow at the World Bank headquarters in Washington, according to sources in Dhaka.

The meeting, which may continue upto August 7, will be followed by a joint appraisal mission to visit Dhaka, possibly on August 20, the sources say.

The two-member Bangladesh delegation comprising Additional Secretary of the Economic Relations Division (ERD) Ayub Quadri and Executive Director of the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Authority (JMB) Mohammad Ali has already left Dhaka to attend the co-financiers' meeting. The

Economic Minister at the Bangladesh Embassy in Washington Ijaz-ul Huq will also attend the meeting.

The meeting has been convened to discuss the method of co-financing, agree on the amount to be financed by each co-financier and finalise the project processing schedule.

Other than the World Bank, the delegations of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Overseas Economic Cooperation Forum (OECF) of Japan are expected to join the meeting.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh government has requested all the co-financiers to award the contracts within the bid validity

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Miyazawa cabinet may resign tomorrow

TOKYO, Aug 3: Japanese Prime Minister Kichi Miyazawa's cabinet is expected to resign on Thursday after an emergency meeting. Finance Minister Yoshiro Hayashi told a news conference today, reports Reuters.

The lower house of Parliament will convene on the same day for a special session to name a successor to Miyazawa.

The long-ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) is set to turn over the reins of government to an eight-party coalition following the LDP's failure to win a parliamentary majority in last month's general election.

Anti-graft campaigner Mofuhiro Hosokawa, head of the centre-right Japan New Party, is expected to become the first non-LDP prime minister in 38 years.

Decision-making process in civil admin faulty: UN experts

By M Anwarul Haq

The report of the Public Administration Sector Study in Bangladesh (PASSB) presented to the government Monday, seriously faulted the decision-making process in the country's civil administrative system.

In a pointed reference the report, prepared by a team of UN experts, stated that the present system is cluttered with excessive paper work that shuttles between "a multitude of both vertical and horizontal layers of responsibility."

Elaborating, the report said the decision-making process is often cumbersome and confusing and almost delayed as responsibility is not well defined. It says that senior civil service officials are found unwilling to take decisions with the result that even routine matters end

up on the desks of Secretaries and Ministers. The study attributes this problem to the lack of job descriptions.

Ministers and senior civil servants spend too much time of housekeeping, personnel questions and insignificant routine matters that should be handled at lower levels, it observed.

The management and implementation, particularly of large scale development projects, appears inadequate because of an unwillingness by the Ministry concerned to apply the relevant rules which provide for delegation. Even where delegation of authority does take place, the effectiveness can be impeded by the need to consult higher authorities before actions are taken.

The Study Team felt an urgent need to examine and revise the rules and regulations of administrative business on decision-making and delegation of authority. It also recommended a more collegiate approach, like evolving a system for holding regular meetings between relevant officials which it said, would facilitate speedy action and reduce the need for passing of files.

As mentioned in our yesterday's report, the PASSB had suggested a decrease in the number of ministries to increase administrative efficiency. It called for a review of allocation of business to different Ministries based on principles of compactness and coherence. It suggested, for example, that

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Civil Service held in low esteem

By Staff Correspondent

The Public Administration Sector Study (PASSB) report, in its findings, noted that although a career in government is still desirable in Bangladesh, the standing of encadred civil servants is not high in the eyes of the public.

The report, handed over to the State Minister for Establishment Monday, said that the civil service has a serious image problem and is now becoming less attractive to graduates.

In the 1950's and 1960's the status and role of the civil services of both India and Pakistan were substantial. Families encouraged children to prepare for, take and pass the competitive examinations and selection as IAS or CS officer was considered an honour and

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20 injured in JCD-BCL clash Barisal Medical College closed sine die

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Aug 3: The Sher-e-Bangla Medical College was closed sine die today following clashes between supporters of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) which left at least 20 students injured Tuesday evening.

The Academic Council after an hour's emergency meeting announced the closure of the college at 12 noon today.

"The decision has been taken," Principal of the college Dr Azizur Rahman told the Daily Star, "to avoid further clashes."

The college authorities asked the students to vacate the college hostels by 6 pm today.

Witnesses said, the clashes originated from the utterance of

'indecent' slogans against the BCL by some JCD processionists yesterday morning. The clashes took serious turn at around 9 pm when supporters of both the student bodies started chasing each other with fire arms.

At least 20 rounds of gunshots and innumerable bomb blasts were heard on the campus till 2:30 am today. However, nobody received any serious injuries in the clashes.

A large contingent of police force has been deployed on the campus.

The college was closed down just a day after the first year MBBS classes began on Monday. A reception to the students was scheduled for the day, but could not be held due to tension on the campus.

AL discusses strategies for Aug 15 hartal

By Staff Correspondent

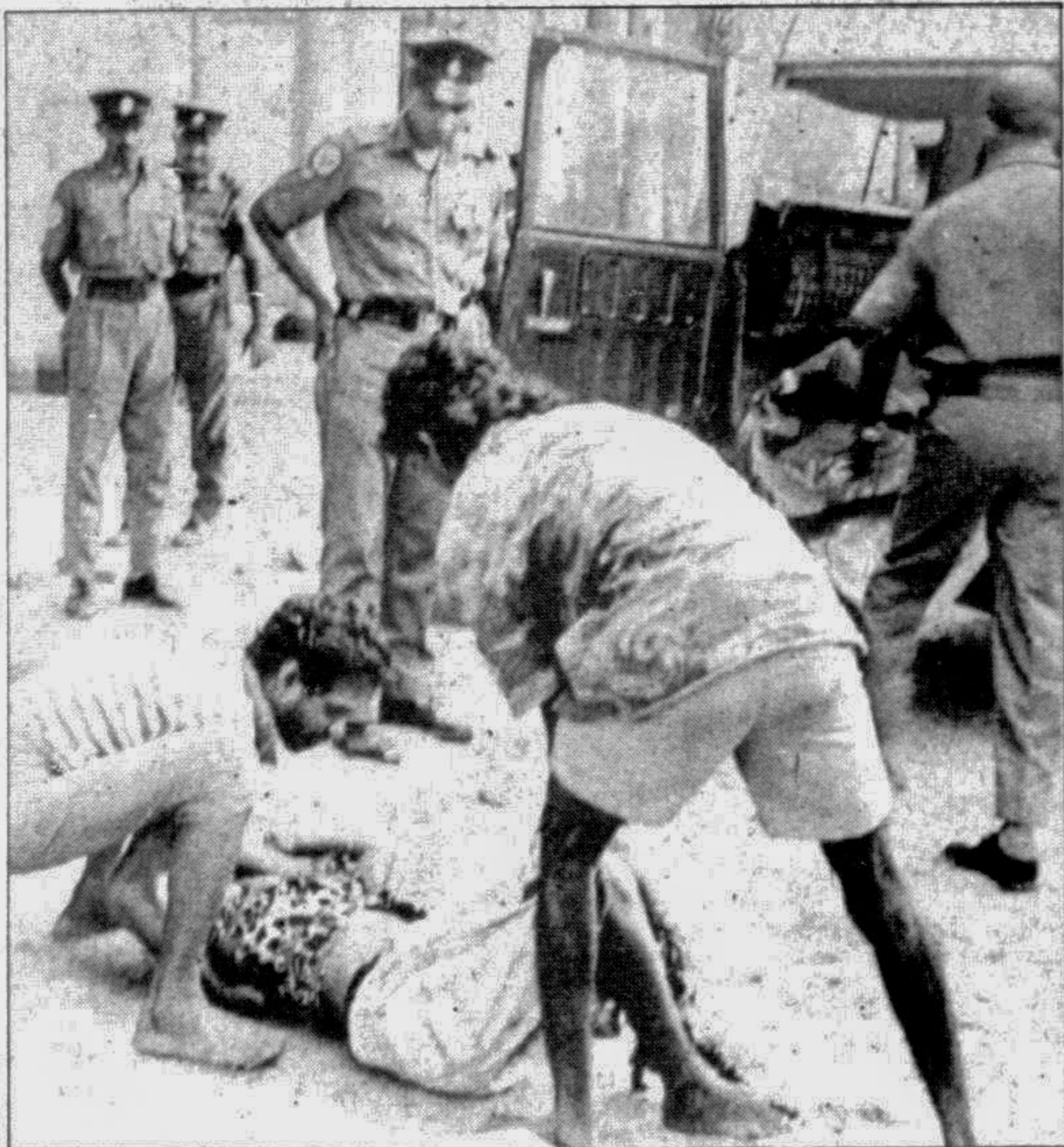
The Awami League (AL) presidium members yesterday felt that the party's August 15 hartal should mark the beginning of an all-out agitation against the alleged nepotism and corrupt practices of the government.

The AL presidium, in a meeting held in the city, discussed the strategies of the planned 'decisive agitation', a party leader attending the meeting said.

The presidium member, requesting anonymity, told the Daily Star that there would be more informal discussions on the possible strategies and tactics over the next two weeks.

The specific programmes of the anti government agitation would be announced during the party's public rally in the city scheduled for August 20.

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Two volunteers lifting the body of a woman killed in a bomb attack near a Hindu temple complex in Colombo yesterday. — AFP photo

6 killed as bombs explode near Hindu temple in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO, Aug 3: Two bombs exploded early Tuesday outside a Hindu temple where a five-day religious festival is under way, killing at least six people and injuring 13, reports AP.

Tamil separatists, who are mostly Hindus, were not initially suspected, and police said they believe the blasts were the results of a dispute between two factions in the temple's management.

The bombs went off on the fourth day of Vel, a Hindu holiday which began Saturday and includes street processions and gatherings at temples to pray and celebrate.

The first bomb exploded around midnight as a Sinhalese man carried it in his pocket through the grounds of Kathiresan temple, where about 100 people were sleeping. Many of them sell candy, tea, bangles and sugar cane during the festival.

Police said the man carrying the bomb was immediately killed and six people wounded. They said the bomber may have been preparing to hide the bomb inside the temple.

The second bomb was hidden on the temple grounds in a brass pot used to make tea that is sold. It exploded when the Sinhalese woman who owned the tea stall tried to remove it early Tuesday.

Tk 140 cr ADB-aided project Health Minister denies any irregularity

By Staff Correspondent

Minister for Health and Family Welfare Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf Tuesday said the provisional consultancy, work order for the ADB-aided Second Health and Family Planning Services Project was issued to avoid delay in its implementation.

He said this was done with the consent of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and after approval of the council committee and the Prime Minister's office.

Talking to The Daily Star at his office yesterday on allegations of irregularities in implementing the Tk 140-crore project, the Minister said the ADB had reviewed all the proposals offered by the consulting firms and directed the ministry on December 10 last year to go for financial negotiation with the first ranking firm after finding its evaluation to be correct.

The ADB also reviewed the complaints against the ministry's decision and found them lacking in merit. However, the bank had sought some clarifications regarding a few points of the Draft Contract Agreement (DCA) relating to payment for the architectural services, the Minister said.

The allegations of irregularities placed before the Petition Committee of Jatiya Sangsad by

the consulting firms who failed to achieve the first rank in the ministry's evaluation, included changing of the Technical Evaluation Committee after submission of proposals by the firms, changing of the terms of references (TOR) by the evaluation committee, sending of a 'false note sheet' by the ministry to the ADB, presenting a foreign consultant by the selected firm as its associate and the rather high rate of fee negotiated with the selected firm.

The Asian Development Bank, however, reviewed all the points raised in the complaint and clarified those in its letter to the government, the Minister said.

Regarding the changing of the Technical Evaluation Committee, the ADB said that this was the ministry's decision.

"We understand this change was made to have a better representation of technical persons in the Committee and to constitute it at a higher level", the bank added. The ministry upgraded the membership of the committee by including Additional Secretary-level officials.

The ADB also said the allegation of changing the terms of references by the ministry was not based on fact.

Regarding sending of a 'false note sheet' by the ministry

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Women's quota in Pak NA demanded

ISLAMABAD, Aug 3: As Pakistan prepares for elections in October, national women's rights organisations today demanded a quota of seats for women in Parliament, reports AFP.

More than a dozen groups, in a resolution adopted at a meeting chaired by the acting chairwoman of the Senate, Noor Jehan Paner, also urged political parties to field women candidates.

In an apparent reference to criticism from some fundamentalist groups of women's role in politics, the resolution called on the election commission to stop all "discriminatory propaganda". Fundamentalist groups strongly opposed Benazir Bhutto's leadership during her stint as Pakistan's first woman prime minister from 1988 to 1990, claiming Islam did not allow women to rule.

The coming mid-term elections resulted from an army-brokered settlement of a political crisis that subsided with the resignations of President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party and Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League are seen as the main forces in the electoral arena.

Women make up 52 per cent of the country's 120 million population, and half of the more than 52 million enrolled voters.

JP leader arrested

By Staff Correspondent

Police arrested Hossain Uddin Sarkar, Jatiya Party leader, yesterday after the High Court rejected his bail when he appeared for the hearing of his case, JP sources said.

Sarkar, a leader from Gazipur who is the Industries and Labour Affairs Secretary of the party, was arrested from the court premises by joint police team of Tongi and Ramna thanas on charges under the Anti-Terrorism Act. The source said.

He was the acting party secretary general during Khaledur Rahman Tito's detention a few months ago.

Tongi police said that Sarkar had been sent to the Dhaka Central Jail.

Trade transactions thru' ACU increase

By Staff Correspondent

Trade transactions routed through the 7-member Asian Clearing Union (ACU) marked an increase for the fifth consecutive year and amounted to 2738 million Asian Monetary Unit (AMU) — nearly four billion US dollar — in 1992.

This was disclosed on Tuesday by Khorshed Alam, Governor of Bangladesh Bank, in a press briefing at the conclusion of the 21st annual meeting of the ACU board of directors here.

The meeting reviewed the annual report of the Tehran-based union, he said, and also discussed possibilities of expanding its role and membership.

Expressing his satisfaction

over the outcome of the meeting, the Bangladesh Bank Governor said it also provided an opportunity for "useful exchange of views", particularly when all member nations are implementing market-oriented economic changes.

The board approved a formal working arrangement between the Union and the Economic and Social Council for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), which initiated the formation of ACU in 1975.

The ACU directors also welcomed collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

The two-day board meeting was attended by central bank

representatives from India, Iran, Nepal, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and hosts Bangladesh.

Presided over by Khorshed Alam, the current chairman, the meet was also attended by the general manager of the Union Secretariat and representatives from the ESCAP and UNCTAD.

At the press briefing, Alam noted that trade transactions of member nations handled by the ACU, which serves as a "local currency adjustment mechanism", is steadily increasing.

Of the 2738 million AMU worth of business routed through the Union last year, he said only 39 per cent involved foreign exchange or a convertible currency. The total trans-

actions handled by the ACU in 1991 stood at 2706 million AMU.

One AMU is equivalent to one Special Drawing Rights (SDR) of the International Monetary Fund (1 SDR=US d 1.44).

Alam said that the ACU directors also reviewed a report on a study by the Reserve Bank of India on the inflationary trends in the member countries.

"Inflation being a very important economic indicator," he added, "the report analyses the trends, the underlying assumptions and the future trends of inflation" in the member nations.

The possibility of increasing

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BNP to invite world leaders to Sept council

By Staff Correspondent

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) is likely to invite a number of internationally well-known democratic leaders to its forthcoming council session to be held in Dhaka September 1 and 2.

A source in the ruling party said that about 40 leading dignitaries are expected to respond to the invitation to attend the ruling party's council session.

Former US presidents Jimmy Carter and George Bush are among the list of invitees. Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao and Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif are also expected to be

invited.

Government and opposition leaders of other SAARC countries, and Britain, France, Malaysia and Turkey will also be invited, BNP sources said.

Meanwhile, more than 25 amendments to the constitution of the BNP are likely to be placed before the council for adoption. The proposed amendments include changing the form of government from a presidential to a parliamentary one which is long overdue since the change in 1991, and creation of several posts in the district committees.

Former US presidents Jimmy Carter and George Bush are among the list of invitees. Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao and Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif are also expected to be

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