Japanese boat purchase case

Ershad defied expert opinion: Witness

A semor civil servant yes terday told the Special Judge's court trying deposed president Hussain Muhammad Ershad in the Japanese relief boat purchase scandal that because of the directives of the former ruler, expert opinion on the purchase of boats was ignored. reports BSS.

Home Secretary Azimuddin Ahmed, testifying before the Additional Sessions Judge and Special Judge Dhaka Mrs Zinat Ara. said that Ershad had directed that all boats be of fibre-glass and be procured from Japan.

Japan provided 2.5 billion yen to procure relief boats in the aftermath of the unprecedented floods in Bangladesh in August-September, 1988.

Ahmed, who was the Relief Secretary from March to November, 1989 when the boats were purchased, is the sixth prosecution witness in this Special Case Number 19 of 1993, better known as the Japanese Relief Boat Case.

Ershad and a Japanese national stand indicted.

The prosecution charges that Ershad, by misusing his official position, caused a loss to the state exchequer to the tune of Taka 33 crore.

A technical committee set up by the authorities for the procurement of the boats had recommended steel-body craft in view of the physical conditions of the country. The rules also stipulated that the boats would have to be procured from countries other than Bangladesh and the OECD (Organisation for Economic and Cooperation Development).

PW-6 Azimuddin Ahmed was also a member of the committee constituted for the procurement of boats in consultation with relevant ministries.

'All boats will be of fibreglass and be procured urgently." was the Directive of Ershad, written on a small piece of paper under his signature. Ahmed testified yester

When asked by the judge whether the witness is acquainted with the handwrit ings of the former ruler Ahmed nodded and replied.

At this stage Ershad, who

400 lawyers for solution to crisis thru' talks

Over four hundred lawyers

belonging to Supreme Court Bar and Dhaka Bar associations have called for a solution to the present political impasse through dialogue, reports BSS.

They also demanded holding of the next general elections after the completion of the tenure of the present Parliament.

In a joint statement here yesterday, they rejected the contention of some lawyers regarding the validity of the Jativa Sangsad and the cabinet after the resignation of the Opposition members.

Destruction of Shah Khurram College: 4 held

From Staff Correspondent SYLHET, Jan 8: Four people were arrested for their alleged involvement in the destruction of Shah Khurram College in Tuker Bazar area under Sadar

All the arrested persons are day labourers.

The 120-foot tin-shed structure and a under-construction building were razed to the ground by a gang of miscreants Friday midnight.

A case has been filed against 40 people with the Kotwali po-

sum for Chittagong, she said. Making a dig at the Awami

for power.

political parties in Parliament at every level.

is accountable to Parliament cannot be removed by any unconstitutional means, she said.

legation that fair election is not possible under the BNP government, Begum Zia said elections of union parishad, pourashava and city corporations as well as many by-elections of Parliament were conducted freely and fairly under her government.

was listening carefully to the proxeedings, stood up in the duck and took hold of the small piece of paper containing his directive - produced in court as an exhibit - from his counsel Yusuf Hossain Humayun who got it from the Public Prosecutor Abdur Razzak Khan, conducting the testimony of the prosecution witness

The witness said the procurement committee received the directive from Ershad to buy the boats from a Japanese company which had met the specifications although the technical committee preferred international participation in the boat purchase tender for which time was ex tended.

After the cross examination of Ahmed, the court adjourned the hearing till January 18.

Ahmed, who was in the witness box for about 90 minutes including nearly 40 min utes of cross-examination. in reply to a question, said he is now serving on extension after retirement in November 1993. The witness agreed with

the defence counsel's suggestion that for a country like Bangladesh boats with quick manoeuvrability are the right answer in view of weather conditions and the depth of water bodies like the rivers rivulets and channels. He also confirmed the grant

was a tied one, having five conditions attached.

The Home Secretary said the carried out some enquiries on the qualification of the tender participants, including Kingsu Mataichi, the lowest bidder, through the ambas sador of Bangladesh in Tokyo.

Koyo was named by Kingsu as its builder and supplier of

The witness endorsed the letter of the then Bangladesh Ambassador Hedayetul Haq read out by the defence counsel, to the effect that Koyo is a small company, having no office in Tokyo or in any big towns of Japan and hence un likely to fulfil its obligations.

Ahmed also agreed with the not barred from supply boats to Bangladesh as per paragraph 49 of the agreement.

The Home Secretary also agreed to the contention that the boats were procured on an emergency basis because there was a feeling at that time that a similar disaster might recur in 1989

He, however, retrained from making any comment when asked whether the procurement, because of the situation of fibre-glass boats on an urgent basis, was wrong as it violated the technical committee's specifications. He however, said the expert opinion was to buy steel-bod-

ied boats. Azimuddin Ahmed further said that because of the directives of Ershad, fibre-glass boats were chosen and that the specification of the fibre glass vessels were prepared at his instance on the specification

provided by the supplier. The witness, answering another question, said that it was not a fact that the decision to procure fibre-glass boats was taken in the interest of the state. He disagreed with the defence suggestion that he had come to testify against Ershad because of the changed political situation although the decision to buy the boats was not

Advocate Shamsul Haq. Khandkar Mahbub Hossain. former ministers Mahbubur Rahman and Barrister Rabiya Bhuyian and several other lawyers were present to defend Ershad.

Special Prosecutor A Razzaque Khan was assisted by Ashraf Ahmed, Additional Public Prosecutor.

PM's public meeting

Dhaka," she said. From Page 1 Col 3 ernment spent such a large

League but without naming. Begum Zia said they forged an alliance with the autocratic forces in their desperate bid She pointed out that all the

had adopted the 12th Amendment of the Constitution to run the country with the elected representatives of the people An elected government that

Retuting the Opposition al-

Although in power, the ruling party candidates suffered defeat in the city corpo-ration polls in Chittagong and

She mentioned that Bills for strengthening the Election Commission and providing identity cards to the voters were passed to ensure fair voting.

Avoiding Parliament, the Opposition took to the street raising the caretaker issue in their bid to resist future victory of the BNP, the Prime Minister said. There is no instance of such caretake government anywhere, she added.

Referring to the 25-year accord with India that will expire next year, Begum Zia alleged that they resorted to conspiracy to put the nation into bondage again.

Presided over by Raozan thana BNP president Mohiuddin Ahmed, the meeting was also addressed by Post and Telecommunications Minister Tariqui Islam, Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain. Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al-Noman, Rosy Kabir MP. Strajul Islam MP. Amir Khasru Mahmud MP and economic affairs secretary of BNP Golam Akbar Khandaker.



Elvis Presley impersonator Fred Wolfe of Detroit (C) talks with sisters Lyn (L) and Cheryl Van Swol of Chicago Saturday prior to an Elvis impersonator contest in Memphies, Tennessee, USA A celebration of the late singer's 60th birthday was held yesterday at Presley's - AFP photo Graceland mansion

OIC calls on Moscow

'Stop indiscriminate use of force in Chechnya'

DUBAL Jan 8. Fifty-one Muslim states grouped under the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) called on Moscow today to end its attacks on the breakaway republic of Chechnya, reports

An OIC statement accused Russia of breaking interna tional law by indiscriminate use of force against civilian centres.

The (OIC) Secretary General urged the government of the Russian Federation to reconsider its position, end the military offensive and create conditions conducive to the opening of a serious dia logue with the Chechen leadcrship it said

The OIC also urged the United Nations to help find a peaceful solution in the con flict in the mainly Muslim re-Trying new tactics in their

nine-day assault. Russian forces systematically pounded central Grozny with rockets and mortars today trying to scatter the Chechen defenders and make room for infantry AP from Grozny said. But the effort seemed only

partially successful against outgunned but spirited defenders. who have been able to sneak around the Russians to counter-attack from behind. Russian troops were posi-

tioned in a rough arc in the city running from northwest to northeast of the prized presi dential palace, in central Freedom Square.

The barren, multi-story brolding has taken several di rect hits and has been gutted by lire on its top floors, but' rebals still held the palace.

Tank and paratroop units were trying to move in frum the cust near the central mar-

circle the palace. Russian tanks had fought their way today to within 300 nietres of the palace, a Chechen fighter returning from the area told AFP.

ket and the west from the

raifway station in a bid to en-

The fighter, Arbi Burlayes said 29 tanks had reached the Chechen capital's central mar ketplace, within firing distance of the presidential palace.

Russian snipers had also advanced and were now behind the presidential palace, an other fighter said Russian forces also laun

ched sporadic air attacks on

outlying villages and ridges. where Chechen lighters have deployed in recent weeks to conduct a guerrilla war Russian reinforcements continued to arrive today

About 10 light tanks accompanied by more than 30 trucks carrying troops and ammunition rumbled in from the Fighter jets roared over the capital throughout the day

although it was unclear whether they had dropped any bombs. A lone helicopter at one point hovered over four large

plumes of black smoke at the Lenin oil refinery, burning in the northwest of the city since the invasion began.

Chechen witnesses said 'the factory complex had been rocketed by helicopter gunships early in the morning They also reported one bombing raid in the morning.

light drizzle caused much in-

convenience for the devotees.

the open sky. Many of them

faced difficulties in cooking

their food because of the rain

All inter city trains, except-

ing the Mahanagar, will stop at

the Tongi stations for two

minutes to enable devotees to

go to the litema venue. The

BRTC and the private bus own-

ers associations hare also ar-

ranged special services for the

Metropolitan Police has ad-

vised vehicles headed for the

litema tomorrow to park at

fields adjoining Jasimuddin

Sarak at Uttara Sectors 3. 6

and 9, the Rabindrasharani,

Haji Camp field and open

spaces at Sectors 11, 12 and

hakhali-Joydevpur route have

been asked to use alternate

routes via Mirpur-Gabtali-

Savar-Nabinagar-Kaliakoir from

Indian ascetic

Tens of thousands of people

From Page 1 Col 2

have converged on 'the house

of non-violence for the past

two months to catch a glimpse

of Sahajmuni and to get his

object of the fast was to

"purify myself of sin and bring

about world peace by drawing

Saliajmuni has beaten the

record of 182 days set cen-

turies ago by Mahavir, founder

left home at the age of 12 and

joined a nomadic group of

ascetics, is a veteran faster. A

pamphlet handed out by his

aides said he first went with-

out food, for three weeks, in

since, gradually increasing the

number of days without food.

He has fasted every year

Sahaimuni, who reportedly

His followers said

attention to my penance."

of the Jain religion.

He told AFP last week the

6:00 am to 5:00 pm.

blessing.

All vehicles on the Mo-

UNB adds: The Dhaka

and the biting cold.

pilgrims.

specially those staying under

Akheri Munajat today

From Page 1 Col 8 the lapr. Zohr and Asr pravers respectively.

Meanwhile, one person died of diarrhoea today at the Red Crescent medical centre at the litema. With this, the death toll rose to five while 15 others were admitted to the Tongi hospital and Red Crescent centre

Seven persons were referred to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMC11)

The medical centre reported that about 4,000 persons received treatment from different medical centres in the litema area today.

The Bangladesh Railway authorities have made ar rangements for special train services for the convenience of home bound pilgrims from Tongi after the prayer concludes tomorrow.

According to the schedule. tour trains will leave for Mymensingh and Akhaura at

1 10 pm and 1:25 pm. President Abdur Rahman Biswas is expected to attend the Akheri Munajat.

Meanwhile, police arrested 26 pick-pockets in two days from the litema site.

Today's cold conditions and

Zahir murder From Page 1 Col 5 said that he was present on

the scene when the young man fatally shot Zahir. As the killer was fleeing.

Hossain said, he cried for help and some people from the Kalabagan playground chased after him and his accomplice, grabbing one of them with a revolver in his possession from near the Magdonals Chinese restaurant

Humayun Zahir, a wellknown businessman, was murdered on April 8, 1993. An Awami League MP -Akhtaruzzaman Babu - has been accused of the murder. Babu has been absconding after jumping bail. .

Two witnesses have been examined so far. Alhaj Zahurul Huy, father-in-law of the victim, was examined on October 9 last year.

sent system of waste disposal at government hospitals, the deputy minister admitted that it was not satisfactory. There are some 1500 class III and class IV employees at the Dhaka Medical College Hospi tal as against an average of 1400 patients. But the hospital, the largest in the country, has developed into an unhealthy one because of inefficient waste disposal," he

Strajul Haq however added that the Health Ministry was actively considering giving the responsibility of waste disposal of government hospitals to private firms

When contacted, a Health Directorate official told this correspondent, on condition of anonymity, that under the auspices of WHO, a survey on 'hospitals' waste disposall was in progress. "Hopefully, the survey will be completed by February and then an integrated waste disposal man agement project will be undertaken with fund to be provided by WHO," said the offi

An official of the Planning and Research wing of the Health Directorate said the number of beds in 16 out of the 19 old district hospitals would be increased to 250 from 100 very shortly.

Besides, the members of beds in 19 out of 397 THCs would be raised to 50 from 31 in the first phase, the official

four ambulances would also be procured very soon for the government hospitals and THCs.

There are 102 government nurses and 24,610 employees and health complexes.

Speaker

From Page 1 Col 7

The Speaker said vesterday that the language of the concerned clauses of the Constitution relating to resignation of MPs is slightly different in the English and Bengali versions. Same is the case with regard to the language in the parliamentary rules of proce-

He said he had no knowledge about any fresh move for talks between the ruling party and the Opposition to defuse the crisis created following the Opposition action.

was no time limit in the Constitution for him to give a decision on the resignation of an MP.

decision on such a delicate issue," he added.

ignations if accepted, would become effective from the date the Opposition members submitted those to him.

formal "submission" of a resignation and the mere act of "receiving" one by the Speaker is not quite the same thing.

From Page | Col 7 main in our view the right way to make progress. A Pakistan Foreign Ministry

spokesman today rejected Hurd's idea of a political process under Indian rule. "... This position is at vari-

ance with history, law and the reality in Kashmir," the spokesman said.

settlement of the Kashmir dispute rather than a restoration of normality.

From Page 1 Col 7 Taka 22 lakh each and has decided to raise the number of beds to 250 at all old district hospitals," said the deputy

New hospitals

When asked about the pre-

One hundred and twenty-

hospitals, 397 THCs. 1,362 health sub-centres and 35 urban dispensaries in the country. Some 6102 doctors, 5649 are working at these hospitals

The Speaker said that there

"But it is unfair to delay a He confirmed that the res-

The Speaker also said that

Hurd

Quoted by the official APP news agency, he said the socalled Simla Agreement, signed after the 1971 India-Pakistan war, envisaged a final

The Midnight File Ctg comes under digital phone network

CHITTAGONG, Jan 8: The

country's commercial capital

Chittagong, was brought under

modern telecommunication

network today when Prime

Minister Begum Khaleda Zia

inaugurated the 22,000-line

digital telephone exchange

line digital telephone ex

change at Nandankanon here

is the first phase of the

project will be installed by

rated the new digital tele-

phone exchange by talking to

Post and Telecommunications

fisheries and Livestock

Minister Abdulla Al Noman

The Prime Minister congratu-

lated the residents of the port

city on the occasion of bring

ing the country's port city un

der the digital telephone net

modern telecommunication

system would help all, particu

would, she said, facilitate the

trade and business activities in

the port city as well as in the

nanced Taka 108.07 crore in

the Taka 235.51 crore projec

while the rest was funded by

project 8,200 analogue tele

phones were converted to dig

ital while 13800 new connec

authoril era

tions will be provided to the

Gas well

From Page 1 Col 2

went into operation formally

that energy like gas plays a

substantial role in the overall

development of the country

and thus the government has

given due emphasis on finding

Zia 'said, the work on the

Baropukuria coal-mine had

started. The government has

also signed agreement with

foreign companies for spotting

new oil and gas fields and their

there are adequate reserves of

gas and mineral resources in

the country. We have to find

out the deposits for using in

socio-economic development

of the nation," she told the

the government had under

taken two projects to meet the

growing demand of gas for in-

dustrialisation and socio-eco-

The Prime Minister said

lun**cti**on.

"It is my firm belief that

In the meantime, Begun

newer sources of energy.

She said it is undentable

on September 24 in 1991.

Under the 22,000 line

the liangladesh government.

The French government fi

larly the businessmen.

She said the introduction of

Begum Zia also talked to

Minister Tarigul Islam, here.

The Prime Minister inaugu

The rest 8.000 lines of the

30.000-line digital project.

The opening of the 22,000-

here, reports BSS.

next June.

Al Gore to visit Egypt in Mar

CAIRO, Jan 8: US Vice President Al Gore is to visit Egypt in March. US Defence Secretary William Perry announced today at the end of a 36-hour visit here. This initiative aims to promote economic growth in jobs creation." Perry told the Egyptian-US Chamber of Commerce before travelling to

Iraq welcomes French decision

BAGHDAD, Jan 8: Iraq today welcomed a French decision to establish a diplomatic mission in Baghdad, but lambasted the US for criticising the French move. State-run newspapers heaped praise on France and scorn on Washington. They said the US had pursued a policy of arrogance towards Iraq. re-

Perry warns of nuclear threat to Middle East

IERUSALEM, Jan 8: US Di lence Secretary William Perry brought a stark warning to the Middle East on Sunday: curb the spread of atomic weapons or face nuclear blackmail by rogue nations or terrorists, reports AP.

Israel, reports AFP.

Early on Sunday. in Cairo. Perry stressed the muclear

is I beheve the biggest

Noorjahan murder From Page 1 Col 8

cused persons, including the victim's husband, after observ ing that the police invistigations were not conducted properly for invoterious rea

A petition submitted before the High Court by the Bangladesh Mahila Parishad said the learned sessions judge did not pass any order for fresh investigation.

Nuriahan, wife of one Torab Ali of village Damuria under Faridpur district, was burnt alive at her residence on May 6, 1993. The murder got wide media coverage.

According to the Mabila

Parishad petition, submitted by its vice-president Bela Nabi. the victim's husband Torab Ali went into hiding from day of the gruesome murder and later upon his arrest; reportedly confessed to the police twice, that he had committed the murder. Despite his confessional

even made an accused of the case for reasons unknown, the petitioner added. Following the incident Nurjahan's brother, filed a case against one Farid and six others. However, strangely enough, Torab's name was not

statement, Torab Ali was not

Barrister Amirul Islam, appearing on behalf of the petitioner, submitted before the court that the offender should not escape the long arm of the

He was assisted by senior

mentioned in that first in

formation report.

security threat that is facing the world this decade, the danger that a rogue nation or terrorist will get their hands on one, five or a dozen nuclear weapons," he said at a breakfast of the American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt.

Egypt has threatened to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) if Israel holds out, and some Arab countries have used Israel's reported nuclear capability as a justification for their chemical weapons pro-

gramme. Later. Perry arrived in Israel for talks in which he will urge the government to join the NPT and may discuss the possibility of stationing US troops on the Golan Heights as part of any Israel-Syria peace

with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in Tel Aviv. Perry travelled to Jerusalem where he was scheduled to hold more talks and visit the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial. Ferry and Rabin did not

Final warning

After a two-hour meeting

From Page 1 Col 4 industrial project which lacks idequate industrial waste treatment facilities. Yet, new mills and factories came up without such facilities and the number of these in-

an ik with reporters.

dustries almost doubled since Meanwhile, the newlyestablished DOE, which is under the environment Ministry. could not take action against these industries because majority of them belonged to the government, sector corporations or the autonomous bod-

ies, one source said. The other problem was that there was no law that allowed the DOE to take legal action

against the environment polluters. A National Environment Policy, which was prepared recently and tabled for approval of Parliament, was yet to be passed because of the re-

nomic development. Advocate Tabarak Hussain On completion of the pro-Barrister Tanya Amir and jects, she said, ten new gas cent political crisis, sources Advocate Shirin Ahmed wells will be supplying gas. | Chowdhury. concerned pointed out. Opening 95 7th January **A Speciality**



Delect from an array of fresh ingredients ranging from meat, fish and seafood to authentic dumplings and crisp vegetables to create your own dish. Steamed fresh on your table, the food is not only nutritious, but taken with the range of

mouth watering sauces from our chef, is also extremely delicious. A glimpse of the menu will tempt you to choose from stuffed prawns, chinese cabbage,

dumplings, wontuns and many more to steam. Healthy eating was never such fun! Along with the steamboat we have an authentic and extensive menu to please regetarians and non vegetarians alike.

We will provide a unique speciality for your gastronomical delight, all served up with the right atmosphere. So why not make it a date. Come to the Steamboat.

For table reservation please contact

Steamboat

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