

The Midnight File

Rutskoi allowed to register for Russian polls

MOSCOW, Nov 3: Russia's highest court today ordered the country's central electoral commission to register Alexander Rutskoi's Nationalist Derzhav (power) Party for next month's general elections. The Russian Supreme Court overruled a decision by the commission last Saturday, which disqualified the former Russian vice president's grouping from competing in the December 17 poll, reports AFP.

UN confce pledges to curb toxic pollution

WASHINGTON, Nov 3: More than 100 countries represented at a United Nations conference pledged to try to reach an agreement to curb pollution by toxics such as DDT and dioxin that accumulate in body tissues, officials said on Thursday, reports Reuter.

Delegates voted unanimously to press for a legally binding deal to cut emissions of persistent organic pollutants, which will be included in the conference's "programme for action" to combat ocean pollution.

Winding up an 11-day meeting on fighting ocean pollution, the countries today are to officially ratify the document that deals with a range of ocean degradation problems.

The document commits nations to work toward a global, legally binding instrument for the reduction and/or elimination of emissions, discharges and, where appropriate, the elimination of the manufacture or use of these chemicals used in pesticides and industrial products, and that sometimes are unwanted by-products of industrial processes.

The document focuses on 12 chemicals such as PCBs, dioxin, DDT and heptachlor-chlorine compounds that persist in the environment, may be carried great distances by air and water and can have disastrous effects on mammals including cancer, reproductive disorders and weakened immune systems.

Schoolboy stabbed to death

By DMCH Correspondent

A minor boy was killed at Shahjhatpur under Gulshan police station yesterday.

Sumon, aged about 13, was stabbed allegedly by his friend at about 2 pm.

With grievous wounds in his back and hands, Sumon was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where he died at about 7 pm.

His attacker has been absconding, police said.

Workshop

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World Bank and donor community officials, NGO representatives, members of the private sector, and academics to engage in a dialogue on policies and programmes for agricultural growth in the future, according to a WB press release yesterday.

Noman

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oment of Chittagong is not fulfilled.

Listing about two dozens of development projects completed or under process of completion during the past five years the minister said, government provided Taka six crore twenty-four lakh 58 thousand against the demand for Taka seven crore 46 lakh for development during the period while Chittagong City Corporation alone received Taka 158 crore 35 lakh 575 from 1991 to 1994 and 45 per cent of this amount was paid to Chittagong City Corporation during the past 19 months.

The development projects completed or under completion during the past five years are Taka 54 crore fish landing centre at Sadarghat, Taka 20 crore general hospital development project at Andarkilla, Taka 69 crore television station at Foy's Lake, Taka 20 crore stadium renovation project, Taka 20 crore Physical Education College, Taka eight crore Mahila Complex at Kuli, Taka 70 lakh veterinary hospital, Taka 33 lakh poverty alleviation programme including dairy and poultry farms, Taka 13 crore Chittagong airport development and expansion project, Taka 500 crore export processing zone site development and the children's park-cum-green belt at Nasirabad.

GATT

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of international scrutiny for verification of transparency of national laws, procedures and proceedings, the study says.

It recommends that a separate office of investigations should be established with adequate manpower and resources and funding provisions.

In addition, a separate bench in the Customs, Excise, VAT Tribunal may be constituted for hearing matters on 'countervailing and contravailing measures'. A central commercial resource centre should also be established, the study says.

CSE opens today

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ney with a total turnover of Tk 3.92 lakh and it reached to Tk 8.74 lakh on the last day.

A significant progress was also marked at the CSE's market capitalisation that increased to Tk 2119.20 crore on the last trading day from the opening day's amount of Tk 795.78 crore.

Some 1,085 shares were exchanged on the opening day while a total of 3275 shares was traded on the last trading day, showing a bright prospect for the bourse.

Sources said 18 630 shares were traded so far at the exchange. A total of 44 companies have already been listed with the CSE and another 5 or 6 are now waiting to be listed.

DOWN TO EARTH

Ambivalence in Zinzira image

By A S M Nurunnabi

Some areas of Keraniganj Police Station of the Dhaka district are known as Zinzira. Keraniganj is a sort of island on the southern side of the Dhaka city at the confluence of the rivers Buriganga and Dhaleswari. Zinzira includes a number of places such as Kaliganj, Mandail, Char Kaliganj, Aganagar, Kathuria, Dakpara and Islamabad. At these places, quite a good number of small and medium-sized industries have grown up. Generally inferior quality and adulterated products are referred to the name of Zinzira.

It may not perhaps be fair to paint a totally dark picture of those places as centres of production of all kinds of fake and inferior goods. In the opinion of some knowledgeable quarters, there are some bright aspects of that picture which are not normally projected outside.

The drive for the establishment of moderate-scale industries in Zinzira dates from the time after independence when most non-local owners of industries left the country abandoning their assets here which went into the hands of their local agents. The latter, with the help of those assets and utilising their work experience under the previous owners, sought to make a beginning in setting up their own industrial enterprises and other businesses in those areas in diversified fields. The patronage received by them in this respect from the government was a helpful factor. Soon a momentum for setting up new industrial and business ventures got a boost when potential entrepreneurs began looking out for suitable sites for their enterprises. As competition in this behalf intensified, their attention focussed towards areas at Zinzira where lands were available at comparative prices. In this manner, industries of various kinds began to grow up in

the areas at Zinzira. From 1986-87, the textile and garments industries founded there began to play an important role in raising the volume of our exports.

It is said that nowadays various products of good quality are produced at Zinzira which are free from the common stigma. The garment industries at Kaliganj in Zinzira area are said to produce high quality jeans pants, jackets and others garment items which are exported. There are also reportedly high-grade textile mills in these areas which produce sarees of such good quality as they can withstand competition from Indian sarees inducted into the market through irregular channels. It is estimated that there are about 50 textile mills at Zinzira whose products have won good name in the market.

Some well-known brands of tar, washing soaps, aluminium products, nuts and bolts, etc are also manufactured here.

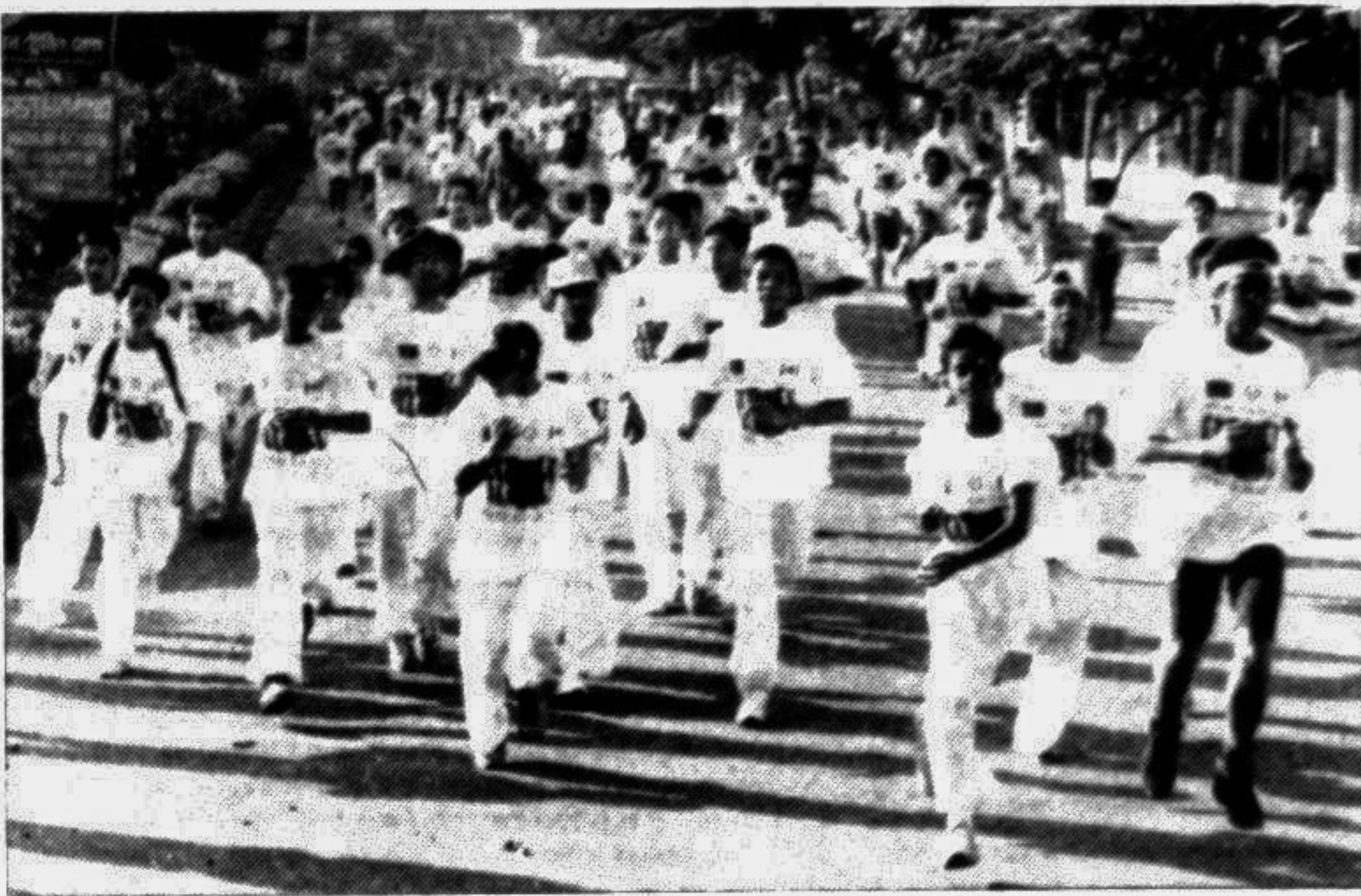
On the other hand, it seems that in some respects, there is substance in the general notion that Zinzira-made products are synonymous with fake and low-quality goods. Some unscrupulous people, in their lust for earning vast riches within a short time, are said to be behind the large-scale racket for producing spurious commodities of many kinds and marketing them all over the country. Sometime ago, we read newspaper reports on the existence of factories in the Islamabad area of Zinzira, making large-scale production of adulterated vegetable ghee and marketing it by using a well-known brand name. Similarly, manufacture of fake dry-cell batteries bearing well-known brand names was reported. There are also reported cases of production of fake and adulterated products like tetra-cycline capsules, mustard

and soyabean oils, spurious China-made transistor radios and locks. A large number of other spurious products made in these areas find easy market particularly among the simple rural people.

We thus find that Zinzira is as much a centre for production of good quality goods as also one for production of spurious and low-quality goods. It is said that there are two reasons for the bad name for Zinzira. One is the inordinate craving of some unscrupulous people to get rich quickly by adopting dishonest practices, the other reason is that people with small means seek to carry on any profitable business by adopting any method fair or foul.

However, the over-all situation at Zinzira has been rapidly changing. The road communication there has improved with the opening of the China Friendship bridge over the Buriganga, and construction of another bridge is in the offing. The internal road network has reportedly also improved. People are more conscious of the evil image that the place has acquired.

Against this backdrop, it is generally felt that the stigma presently attaching to the name of Zinzira will die down if government pay more attention to the development of genuine industries in this area by granting liberal credit facilities with provision of scope for training of the work-force in appropriate technologies. At the same time it is imperative that stern measures be adopted to check with a heavy hand the growth of any enterprise that may be engaged in the production of spurious and adulterated goods of any kind. If such a situation can be brought about, it is felt that there is no reason why Zinzira cannot develop into an important industrial zone, contributing to the betterment of the economic life of the country.



The second annual Terry Fox Run for Cancer Research was held in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Hasina tells discussion meet Next polls must be held under caretaker govt

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina has reiterated that the next general elections must be held under a non-partisan caretaker government.

She sought peoples' all out support for making the movement programmes a total success to force the party in power accept the Oppositions demand.

The AL chief was presiding over a discussion meeting in observance of the 'jail killing day' at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city yesterday.

AL leaders taking part in the discussion vowed to carry forward the 'peoples movement for democracy' since, the raid, the exchanges of letters between the two top leaders would bring no result until the ruling party concedes to the demand for elections under a caretaker government.

They said the AL chief had already told the group of five eminent citizens to tell the Prime Minister to name a neutral person who could head a caretaker government. If the PM fails to do so immediately, "our movement will proceed in own course," they added.

Paying rich tributes to four national leaders and organisers of the Liberation War who were killed inside Dhaka Central Jail on this day 20 years ago the AL president said, "It's a matter of sorrow

and shame that the killers of our national leaders were rewarded with diplomatic jobs by the Zia government."

Expressing concern over the deteriorating law and order, she said during the last five years at least 58 businessmen were murdered in Dhaka alone and incidents of mugging and kidnapping have become rampant in the country, "as if there exists no government." In this connection, she mentioned theft of rifles from a minister's residence and snatching of ornaments from women MPs.

"Ruling party people are engaged in corrupt practices and plunder of public funds to win the next elections using that money," Hasina said.

The AL chief said that Magura and Mirpur by-elections had already proved that no election under the present government could be free and fair and 'this is why, we are fighting for peoples' right to food and their franchise'.

Senior party leaders Abdus Samad Azad, Abdur Razzak, Suranjit Sengupta, Tofael Ahmed, Sayed Zohra Tajuddin, Mohammad Nasim, Amir Hussain Amu, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya and Mofazzal Hussain Paltu, Srani League leader Abdus Salam Khan, Jubo League leader Kazi Iqbal Hussain and Dr Mohammad Selim took part in discussion.

No talks with pre-condition, says Khaleda

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday reiterated her call for open dialogue with the Opposition to resolve the current political crisis, reports UNB.

She said all problems relating to the next elections could be considered as the agenda of the dialogue.

Begum Zia was talking to a group of senior teachers of the Chittagong University, who met her for an exchange of views on various issues at 30 Hare Road last night.

The Prime Minister said a discussion cannot be held by setting pre-condition. "Let's come forward for a dialogue with open mind. We will discuss everything on the table," she said.

Begum Zia said she had mentioned in her letter about the holding of future national elections because the prevailing political problem had resulted from elections.

She made it clear that the country is being run as per the Constitution and "I will never violate the Constitution."

Turning to hartal and blockade programme of the Opposition, the Prime Minister said they are willfully ruining the country through hartals and causing untold suffering to the common people.

Begum Zia asked the teachers to create opinion about the adverse effect of hartal within their capacity.

PM's second letter

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fulfilling the hopes and aspiration of the people, want to keep the existing democracy unhindered, we want to fulfil the sincere urge of the people that the country be ruled by the government elected by the people and want to hold free and fair elections so that all voters of the country can exercise right of franchise in a peaceful and fearless atmosphere.

"We have to talk with an open mind having a sense of mutual confidence and cooperation to translate into reality those aspirations of ours, we have to listen to each other, we should have broad mentality for taking decisions on the basis of logic, law and constitution. No discussion with preconditions can be fruitful — this reality has to be realised.

"In your letter you have identified "overcoming the prevailing crisis" as main aim of discussions and stressed the need for fixing agenda before discussion. You have also accepted in your letter that "a fruitful solution is always possible through meaningful discussion with goodwill and sincerity whatever complex the problem or crisis may be."

"Expressing our unanimity with your statement we want to say that let us take "the solution of all problems relating to the forthcoming Sangsad polls" as the agenda of discussion because at the present moment the principal political problem is the problem relating to coming parliamentary polls. So it should be kept open to discuss any issue to be raised by both sides on the discussion table. Let us come to meet with goodwill and sincerity for a meaningful discussion for reaching a fruitful solution.

"Hope you will respond positively to my sincere call."

Cooperative Week begins today

National Cooperative Week begins today under the auspices of Bangladesh Jatiya Samabaya Union and Cooperative Department, reports UNB.

The first day of the week will be observed as National Cooperative Day.

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PM for talks

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tion, Mannan Bhuiyan said the move by the group of five eminent citizens was supplementary to the ruling party's initiative to resolve the political problems.

Regarding the Opposition's planned hartal, he said "We'll not obstruct their programme. Because, we don't believe in confrontation but in peace."

As regards BNP's stepped up street programmes, the acting Secretary General of the party said, "We're carrying on party activities just as the opposition parties are doing."

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Meanwhile, Sheikh Hasina yesterday received Begum Zia's second letter, sent to her Thursday night through AL General Secretary Zillur Rahman.

Hasina, after discussions on the letter with senior party colleagues, decided to write to the PM again.

Sources close to the AL chief told The Daily Star last night that she would reiterate to the PM her proposal to accept the concept of a caretaker government to have a 'meaningful' dialogue." Hasina's letter, which was drafted last night, might be sent to the PM today, the sources added.

5 injured in Lalbagh clash

By Staff Correspondent

At least 5 persons, including two constables, were injured when two groups of musclemen clashed at Killar Morh under Lalbagh police station last night.

The two groups, one led by Yasin and the other by Anwar clashed and chased each other exploding cock-tails to establish their hold over the area.

Blast hurts 4 cops in Barisal

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Nov 3: A police Sub-Inspector and three constables were seriously injured when a bomb exploded at Chawkbazar in the town today.

Police and witnesses said, some arms explosives and bombs, seized earlier, were being transferred by police from the old 'Maikhana' (store) to the new Maikhana in the recently constructed Collectorate building. Suddenly, a bomb fell from the hands of a constable and exploded.



South African President Nelson Mandela (L) chats with Queen Norr of Jordan in her capacity as president of the United World Colleges at the opening of the annual congress in Johannesburg yesterday. — AFP/UNB photo

Supreme Court, HR body ask Arunachal govt Stop move to oust Chakmas

NEW DELHI, Nov 3: Armed with the Supreme Court order directing Arunachal Pradesh government not to oust Chakma and Hajong tribals from the state, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) is keenly watching the state government's stand on the issue, reports PTI.

The NHRC, which examined a series of complaints on alleged atrocities against the refugees settled in the state, had directed the state government to stay its hands and allow the status quo to be maintained.

The refugees were settled in the erstwhile northeastern frontier province, now Arunachal Pradesh, by the centre in late 1960s. These tribals, originally belonging to the Chittagong Hill Tracts, were later granted various facilities including cultivable land and ration cards.

The complaints received by the NHRC from the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUC), Committee for Cit-

zenship Rights of Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh (CCRCA) and People's Rights Organisation (PRO), are mainly related to atrocities like burning down of houses, threats to quit the state, physical assault and other forms of harassment.

The apex court, on receipt of the HNRG complaint, granted an interim stay directing the state government not to oust Chakma refugees from the state by any coercive action not in accordance with law.

The NHRC in its directions noted that some of the allegations clearly indicated that unless immediate intervention of the union government was made, the position might worsen and a situation might arise where subsequent steps might not sufficiently undo the harm.

"On the one hand the state government had delayed the disposal of the matter by not furnishing a proper response, while on the other, it was trying to enforce eviction through its agencies and with the

assistance of outsiders," NHRC said.

After a thorough examination of the complaints received last week, the Commission asked the state government to stay its hands and allow the status quo to be maintained.

Its directions were communicated to the Governor, the Chief Minister and the Chief Secretary of the state and also to the Union Home Minister and his ministry.

"Expressing doubts, however, whether its directions would be effectively implemented, the commission decided to approach the Supreme Court of India through a writ petition," a NHRC press release said.

Meanwhile, all MLAs, including the state Chief Minister Gegong Apang, have warned the Centre to oust the tribals by this year end, failing which they would quit their respective political parties and float an umbrella organisation to start an agitation for removal of the Chakmas and Hajongs.