

Inside Today

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Language problem might have caused mid-air collision, say Indian aviation experts

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Clarification

Yesterday in the heading of our lead story, it was inadvertently written "JS unanimously passes Indemnity (Repeal) Bill." It needs to be clarified that "Unanimously" actually refers to unanimity among members present in the House. As it is stated in the story, BNP, Jamaat and IOJ were absent in the House when the voting took place.

NEWS BRIEFS

AL activist shot at Fakirhat

From Staff Correspondent
KHULNA, Nov 13: An activist of Fakirhat thana AL Mahmud Hossain, 32, was severely injured when a rival group shot him yesterday evening. Eight others were also injured.

Old man murdered in Barguna

From Staff Correspondent
BARISAL, Nov 13: An old man was murdered at Amtali village under Amtali thana of Barguna district last night. Police and witnesses said some seven to eight miscreants wearing masks entered the house of Alaharuddin Peada, 60, and later strangled him to death after beating him, with his two minor children and second wife.

AL factions clash at Fakirhat: 20 hurt

From Staff Correspondent
KHULNA, Nov 13: At least twenty persons were injured, two of them seriously, in an hour-long gunbattle allegedly between two rival groups of Awami League at Fakirhat yesterday evening. The police lobbed tear gas shells and fired blank shots to bring the situation under control.

Boy commits suicide in city

By Staff Correspondent
A teenage boy allegedly committed suicide at his house at Uttarkhan under Uttara thana in the city yesterday. According to police, Hazrat Ali, 14, son of Md Alauddin was found hanging from the ceiling of the house at around 2:00 pm when his brother went to call him for lunch. The body was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for autopsy, police said. An unnatural death case was filed. The cause of the suicide was not known.

2 killed in road accident

MYMENSINGH Nov 13: Two people were killed when a speeding truck knocked a rickshaw on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway near Trishal thana headquarters today. The dead were identified as rickshawpuller Abdul Matin, 35, and passenger Emdadul Haq, 38 - both local residents. Witnesses said the accident occurred at about 6:30 pm when the truck hit the rickshaw from behind killing its puller and lone passenger on the spot, reports UNB.

31 killed in Indian bus plunge

NEW DELHI, Nov 13: At least 31 people were killed today when a state-run bus plunged into a river in the northern Indian state of Rajasthan, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported. Eight others were injured in the accident in Bundi district, PTI said. It did not say how many people were in the bus, reports AFP.

Water sharing agreement at Delhi summit in mid-Dec

Kunal Ganguly writes from New Delhi

India will announce an agreement with Bangladesh on sharing of waters of Ganges River at a summit between Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart H D Deve Gowda in mid-December, foreign ministry officials said yesterday.

The last round of talks held on the crucial issue yesterday was somewhat clouded due to Tuesday's air disaster near Delhi. However, the visiting Bangladesh delegation had done most of its work Tuesday.

It was not immediately known how much water India will release. However, it appears that a broad agreement has been reached. But observers believe that the proposal must be agreeable to West Bengal state which is a major player in the water dispute.

India agrees that Bangladesh does need more water, but the

United Front government in Delhi does not want to take any decision without consulting and getting a 'Yes' from West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu.

"India is in catch-22 situation after committing that the new government must have a decision before the year-end," said an Asian diplomat watching the talks.

This may be the reason why New Delhi wants Basu to go to Bangladesh beginning Nov 27 so that he can justify himself about Bangladesh's water needs and can talk to Bangladesh officials in this regard.

Back in September when Foreign Minister I K Gujral visited Bangladesh, he was accompanied by four members of parliament from West Bengal. This would be the first time that Basu would be out of the country to negotiate an international issue, a kind of mission usually

reserved for the central government.

"But the water issue is unique and the two important players are West Bengal and Bangladesh and there has to be meeting between them first," said the diplomat on condition of anonymity.

The visit by Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad was marked by very warm handshakes, wide smiles, and the word "excellent" many a times. Samad Azad even amused many TV cameramen and journalists by using the "bhalo, bhalo" (good, good) while describing the outcome of his talks.

Samad Azad met with President Shankar Dayal Sharma, Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda and the Congress president Sitaram Kesri. All the three visits were shown on state-run Doordarshan television.

Experts meet soon to finalise draft accord

NEW DELHI, Nov 13: The talks between Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad and his Indian counterpart Inder K Gujral ended here today with a commitment to resolve the Ganges waters sharing problem by the end of the year, reports BSS.

Samad Azad at the talks stressed the need for an immediate and permanent resolution of the issue on a fair and equitable basis taking into consideration Bangladesh's crying need for the Ganges waters before the onset of the next dry season and particularly during the leanest period of the dry season.

See Page 12 Col 8

BNP demands 'clear statement' on its 10-pt demand

By Nazmul Ashraf

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) will "consider the offer for dialogue" if the ruling party comes up with a "clear statement" on its 10-point charter of demand, submitted to Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury on Monday, Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP Vice-Chairman Badruddoza Chowdhury said here yesterday.

"The government must come up with a clear statement on our 10-point proposals to help the parliament function effectively... Only then we can consider their offer for dialogue," he told a group of reporters yesterday evening.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, MP, when contacted told The Daily Star last night, "We're under constant pressure from our workers, facing oppression by the

government, to launch an agitation."

The BNP has been abstaining from attending the parliament session since submission of its 10-point demand to the Speaker on Monday.

The day after, the ruling Awami League invited the largest opposition party to sit for an "unconditional dialogue" to resolve the crisis.

Asked if his party had rejected the dialogue offer, Badruddoza told the reporters at his Magbazar medical chamber in the city, "We're waiting to see that the government takes effective steps to remove our grievances." "How can we sit for discussions unless we're convinced about their sincerity to resolve the issues?" he posed the question.

Alleging massive persecution, See Page 12 Col 1

PM leaves for Rome

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina left for Rome late last night to lead the Bangladesh delegation to the World Food Summit, reports UNB.

The five-day international conference sponsored by Food and Agriculture Organisation began at the FAO headquarters in the Italian capital yesterday with the participation of all 196 UN member countries. About 100 heads of state or government are expected to attend the meeting.

Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to address the Summit on Saturday.

LGRD Minister Zillur Rahman, Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria, Education Minister A S H K Sadique and Mayor of Dhaka, Mohammad Hanif, Italian Ambassador in Bangladesh Raffaele Miniero, Dean of Diplomatic Corps and Palestinian Ambassador Shahta Zarab, chiefs of three services and other high officials were present at the VIP terminal of the Zia International Airport to see the Prime Minister off.

The Bangladesh delegation will include Food, Agriculture, Disaster Management and See Page 12 Col 1

5 policemen, four snatchers hurt in bomb blasts

Five policemen, including a sub-inspector and four snatchers, were injured in bomb blasts at Lalbagh in the city yesterday morning, reports BSS.

The miscreants hurled bombs at the law enforcing personnel in front of the Westend High School at Lalbagh in an attempt to rob pedestrians. S.I. of police Nasir Uddin, 45, and four constables identified as Abdul Majid, 40, Nurul Huq, 45, Elias, 55, and Alauddin, 30, received serious injuries.

The snatchers tried to escape by an autorickshaw which overturned and the bombs they were carrying exploded. Of the See Page 12 Col 3

Stoppage of gas supply

KPM, KRM workers stage sit-in in front of BGSL office

From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Nov 13: Hundreds of workers of the Karnaphuli Paper Mills (KPM) and the Rayon Mills today staged a sit-in in front of the Bakhrabad Gas System office here today protesting the stoppage of gas supply to the two industries.

The two industries are closed since November 3 because of the disconnection of gas supply from Bakhrabad. The workers of the two industries came to Chittagong from Chandraghona of Kaptai and marched through different city roads. Later, they staged a sit-in in front of the gas distribution centre at Jamal Khan Road.

At a rally, the leaders of the workers urged the authorities to restore gas supply and help resume production in the industries.

The angry workers earlier put up barricades on the Kaptai-Chittagong road near the KPM to realise their demand. They also threatened to launch a greater programme if their demands are not met soon.

Outlawed PBCP activist gunned down in Dumuria

From Our Correspondent

KHULNA, Nov 13: An activist of the outlawed Purbu Bangla Communist Party (PBCP) Baharul Islam, 35, who is an accused in a double murder case of Tala thana, was gunned down at a shrimp enclosure under Dumuria thana last night.

Police recovered the bullet ridden body.

Strike at RMCH continues

From Our Correspondent

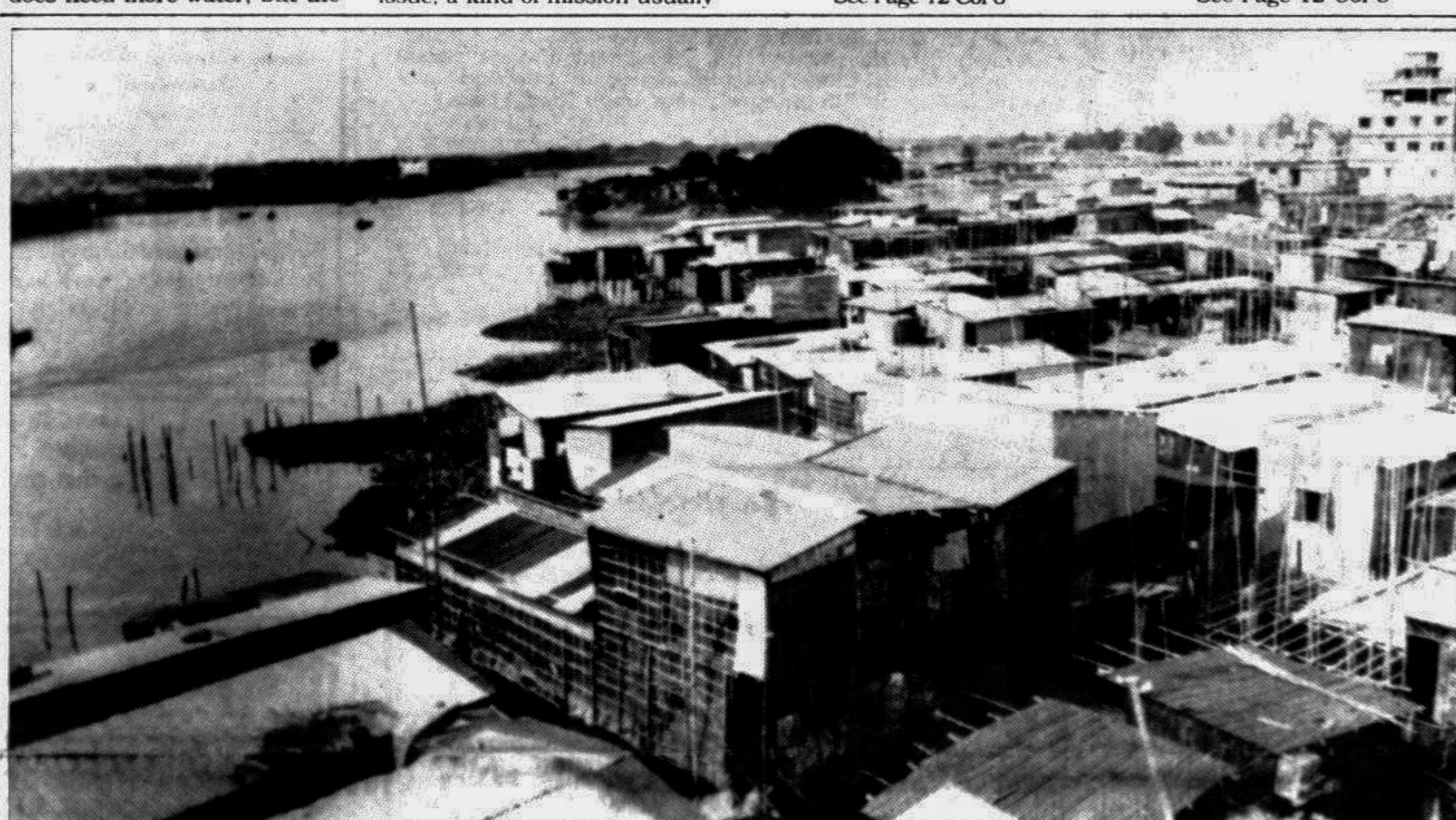
RAJSHAHI, Nov 13: Normal work of the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) came to a standstill today due to the strike of the doctors and the employees following yesterday's clash.

The interneer doctors went on strike for an indefinite period protesting the alleged attacks on them by the class four employees and police. Other doctors also abstained from duties.

The class four employees also did not attend office today. They kept all offices under lock and key disrupting normal work in the hospital. Only the nurses were seen on duty. The operation theatres, outdoor services and stores remained closed.

The class four employees association at an emergency meeting demanded removal of Prof Rafiqul Hossain, Head of the Medicine Department and Prof A B Siddiqui of Paediatrics for their alleged partisan role.

On the other hand, the Interneer Doctors Association demanded removal of Col Nazmul Huda, Director of the hospital for his alleged failure to protect the doctors.



AND QUIET FLOWS THE BURIGANGA: For four centuries, it prattles along the city of Dhaka. First, the Mughals developed the river side, building their camps, fortifications, administrative centres, residences and businesses. When the Mughal fortune went down the river, the English took over. Up came the Buckland bund, stretching the thriving commercial and residential quarters in late 19th century. Now the famed bund is part of history. Whatever remains now is a shabby, dirty excuse of a riverside, something a city can never feel proud of. As the precious lands all around are filled up, the fortune hunters are trying to expand, this time on the river itself. They trained the river with spikes to help accretion of silt with liberal fillings of garbages. Miles of the river is now slowly becoming land fills for new development. Elsewhere, shanties lay claim on the river, standing on platforms of bamboos, which help fast accumulation of silt. Is there anyone to bother about it? If so, visit the river side, please, before quiet dies the Buriganga.

— Shehab Ahmed with Photos by Enamul Huq

Rome Declaration adopted Commitment to reduce hunger, malnutrition by half by 2015

Neeman Sobhan writes from Rome

The World Food Summit began yesterday morning at the Plenary Hall of the FAO Headquarters, with quiet dignity as the white robed figure of His Holiness Pope John Paul II read out his opening message.

The Pope's speech, in French, was followed by an address, in Italian, by the President of Italy Oscar Luigi Scalfaro. The other two speeches that rounded up the morning's inaugural ceremony were again in French, respectively by the Secretary-General of the United Nations Boutros Boutros-Ghali and Jacques Diouf, FAO Director General.

The Food Summit yesterday adopted a plan aimed at halving the number of people who suffer chronic hunger and malnutrition from the present 840 million by the year 2015.

The commitment was contained in a declaration on world food security and a Plan of Action on how to achieve food for all that was approved by acclamation at the first working session of the 194-nation five-day summit.

This is the first time in the history of conferences that a policy statement and Plan of Action has been agreed upon by the member countries before the Summit. The Rome Declaration on World Food Security and its companion Plan of Action was approved by the Committee on World Food Security at its 22nd session on Oct 31.

This was the result of two and a half years of work in regional groups. Fifteen technical documents were prepared and the seven commitments comprising the Plan of Action were defined. Now it is expected that

the heads of state or government will outline specific national plans for implementation.

The declaration was finalised and formally adopted at the start of the Summit. Jacques Diouf said that by approving the declaration in advance, delegates had the opportunity, "for the first time in the history of United Nations Summits" to focus on actions rather than words.

"You have the opportunity to focus not on reaching consensus but on identifying the concrete actions that each intends to conduct so that the commitments solemnly made before the international community can be maintained," Diouf said.

Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi, appointed See Page 12 Col 4

the opening balance for credit in the agriculture sector on July one this year was 318.40 million US dollars while it was 196.36 million last year. Non-agriculture credit balance was 821.65 million dollars this year against last year's 1111.73 million.

Between July and September, the government disbursed 22.78 million dollars (7.15 per cent) in agriculture credit while in the corresponding period last year, it was 5.89 million dollars (3 per cent).

During the same period the government disbursed 58.28 million dollars (7.09 per cent) in non-agriculture credit while in the corresponding period last year it was 50.59 million dollars (4.55 per cent).

The total opening balance against agricultural, non-agri- See Page 12 Col 6



Imelda jailed for 24 years

MANILA, Nov 13: A Philippine court today confirmed a 24-year jail sentence for former first lady Imelda Marcos, widow of former dictator Ferdinand Marcos, who was convicted of corruption in 1993, reports AFP.

Earlier a Philippines court today rejected an appeal by former first lady Imelda Marcos against a 1993 ruling sentencing her to 18 years in jail for corruption, reports Reuters.

The three-judges of Manila's See Page 16 Col 7

Housemaid rescued from garbage container!

By DMC Correspondent

After merciless beating, a teenage housemaid was allegedly dumped in a roadside garbage container at Kathaligan in the city at dead of night.

But some local people rescued her in the early morning and took her to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. She is now improving.

Parveen Aktar, 15, claims she worked in a house at Shantinagar. The house lady beat her mercilessly and had left her in a garbage container at the dead of night on November 4.

Parveen told this correspondent that she was the daughter of one Abdul Wahab of Dhaleshwar village under Barura thana of Comilla district. She said she had started working as a maid in the house at Shantinagar a few days back.

Benazir launches legal battle for comeback

ISLAMABAD, Nov 13: Ousted Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto launched her legal battle today to have her government returned to power, one week after her second term in office came to an abrupt and inglorious end, reports AP.

In a 42-page petition filed with the Supreme Court, Benazir challenged the President's constitutional authority to dismiss her government and accused him of acting out of personal spite.

In the early morning hours of November 5, President Farooq Leghari dismissed Benazir and dissolved her government.

The airports were sealed, her husband arrested and a terse letter delivered to her palatial hilltop residence telling her of her dismissal.

"He sent the letter in a most dishonourable way," said Benazir shortly after her dismissal.

Leghari's six-page indictment read like a rap sheet.

He accused Benazir of sanctioning police hit squads, interfering in the police investigation of her brother's death and shamelessly stealing millions of rupees from the state treasury.

Benazir has denied the charges. Interim Prime Minister Meeraj Khalid yesterday appealed to Pakistanis to provide evidence of Benazir's corruption, reject her in general elections set for next February and elect honest and able leadership.

Meanwhile, Benazir also accused Leghari, a former ally and friend of 20 years, of masterminding the death of her estranged brother, Murtaza.

Leghari's hands are not clean, there is a nexus between my brother's death and the President," the national newspaper, The News, quoted Benazir as saying.

Benazir's petition challenging her dismissal tells of a relationship gone sour.

According to Benazir the President turned "bitter and See Page 12 Col 2

Privatisation of SOEs

Employees to get benefits as per industrial law

By Govinda Shil

The workers and officials working in the 65 state-owned enterprises (SOEs) which are under the privatisation process will get financial benefits as per the Industrial Relations Law, according to official sources.

"They will not receive any additional compensation. This is not a golden handshake," said a senior official of the Privatisation Board. "Jute mill workers might be given package under the Jute Sector Reform Programme," he added.

The Privatisation Board (PB) will sell 65 state-owned enterprises by June 1997. The process to sell 16 units has started and may be completed by early next year, he said. These included jute, textile, steel and engineering, food and sugar mills, he pointed out.

The PB is now assessing the market value of movable and See Page 12 Col 6

immovable property of these enterprises for which tenders have been invited. "We will not disclose the value of the property to keep our mills and factories competitive," the official noted.

The PB is receiving correspondence from foreign companies and individuals including Bangladeshi entrepreneurs and non-resident Bangladeshis showing their interest to buy the industrial units, the official said.

"After the successful privatisation of the proposed 65 SOEs, we may go for another phase of denationalisation late next year," said another official of the PB. The list includes some profit-making enterprises also," he said.

Interested foreign buyers have been asked to contact See Page 12 Col 6