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# BLUE DART

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# Down to Earth

Concentration of lead in Dhaka metropolitan city's air during the low-rain period has been reported to be one of the highest in the world. It has been revealed after a 17-month analysis carried out by some scientists of the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC). The quantity of lead found in Dhaka's air during the months of November to January was 463 nanogram (billionth of a gram) per cubic metre, according to the analysis report. Second in the list is Mexico City with a concentration of 383 nanogram, while Bombay comes third with a count of 360 nanogram.

Lead has long been recognised as a neurontoxin and it has adverse effects on brain development of children. Scientific evidence shows that lead retards the mental and physical growth of children, causing reading and learning disabilities, hearing loss, hyperactivity and reduced attention span even at low levels of exposure.

Ingestion of lead is the main cause of poisoning in children who represent the highest risk group due to their propensity to ingest significant quantities of contaminated dust and soil Adults are also susceptible to lead exposure through inhalation. The main sources of human exposure to lead include leaded gasoline, industrial processes such as lead smelting and coal combustion, lead-based paints and leaden pipes or leadbased solder in water supply systems. Many countries have already banned use of many leaden products and have taken measures to control emissions.

Vehicular traffic, however remains the single largest source of environmental lead pollution in the city's urban area, accounting for about 90 per cent of all lead emissions into atmosphere. Besides posing an immediate health risk through inhalation, vehicular lead emissions also accumulate in the soil and enter the food chain, contributing to exposure through ingestion for long periods of time. High blood lead

From Page 1

Bahrain-Bangladesh Finance

Investment Co Ltd. Bay Leasing

Investment Ltd and Delta Brac

were given Letter of Intent

without the approval of the gov-

ernor. These were: Peoples

Leasing and Finance Services

Ltd. Industrial Finance Ltd and

Dhaka National Leasing and

former Deputy Governor M R

Khan told the finance secretary

that he was "asserting the gov-

ernor's power" in issuing the li-

censes or Letter of Intent at the

"implicit consent of the gover-

nor." He claimed that the gov-

ernor knew what was happen-

take immediate steps to stop

repetition of such irregulari-

mation of the Securities and

Exchange Commission (SEC)

BB was given interim responsi-

bility to supervise activities of

the FIs until the SEC was prop-

erly equipped for it. But this has

created 'overlapping' of the jobs

The report emphasised bet-

It recommended that impor-

ter coordination of BB and the

SEC regarding regulation of dif-

tant issues like imposition of

Edn policy

From Page 1

ered educationists and

sue saying the government is

vet to take any decisions on

Khuda Commission report, he

said that there should be a

committee to regulate the man-

agement of government educa-

standard of education.

private tution.

nancing.

tional institutions to ensure

mitted that teachers are not

well paid. He expressed concern

over the growing tendency of

that the Kudrat-e-Khuda Com-

mission report could be a guide-

line for a national education

that the four basic principles of

the constitution were reflected

in the report of the Commis-

five session were held on the

education system in

Bangladesh with special focus

riculum, examination system

and evaluation, guidelines for

services of teachers, and fi-

on policies, syllabus and cur-

Prof M Aminul Islam said

In the day-long workshop,

Prof Azad Chowdhury said

The education minister ad-

Quoting from the Kudrat-e-

economists on this specific is-

ties," the report opined.

of the BB and the SEC

ferent Fls.

"Bangladesh Bank should

It noted that following for-

ing and did not object to those.

During the investigation.

In addition, three companies

Housing Finance Corp.

Finance Co Ltd.

# Hazards to Public Health In City Life

By ASM Nurunnabi

levels have been detected in ur ban areas where gasoline with high lead content is widely used, contributing to large public health costs

In Bangladesh, unlike many developing countries of the world, all vehicular fuels are leaded. During the medium rain-fall period (February-May) the concentration of lead in the air falls to 253 nanogram per cubic metre of air in Dhaka metropolitan city, according to the analysis of Bangladeshi scientists. The particulate masses are the lowest at 160 nanogram between June and August, when the rain-falls is the highest Dhaka city people are report edly more at risk from lead poisoning during low rain-fall period (November-January).

Countries around the world are at various stages of tackling the problem of human exposure to traffic-related lead emissions. Public awareness of the impact on health of vehicular lead emissions coupled with strong political will to tackle the problem can play a decisive role in phasing out leaded gasoine in our country, which can get support from global funds in this behalf for the sake of public health and health environ

There is also vital question relating to water supply in Dhaka city. It is asked — is it safe? Much of Dhaka city's water supply is provided by deep tubewells which draw water from underground reservoirs. This is siphoned off to overhead storage tanks from where it is distributed through a reticulation of mains and service pipes to households or street taps or hydrants. In this arrangement. pollution can simply occur at every level of the distribution network. Although it is possible to kill bacteria and other toxins

Bangladesh Bank Financial

Institution Regulations, 1994.

bank's Board for approval.

should be placed at the central

Regulations, 1977, is not ade-

quate for all works and there-

fore, the BB should immedi-

ately identify which cases

should be approved by the gov-

the Board of Directors under

these regulations, the report

Board of Directors or the

should take immediate steps to

carry out a decision of the

Cabinet to transfer authorities

to Finance and Financial

Affairs Council Committee to

review and recommend the

policies of the banks, insurance

Attack on labourers

in Jessore: 5 hurt

From Our Correspondent

JESSORE, Nov 22: Five per-

sons were injured, two of them

seriously in a clash between two

groups of people over taking of

meal by some Muslim labourers

at the house of a Hindu farmer

at Ajmeherpur under Bagher-

para thana in the district last

Muslim labourers from a

neighbouring area worked in

the field of a local Hindu farmer

and took food at his house. This

enraged a group of local mullas

identified as Abu Jafor (60)

Jobed (40) Abul Hossain (27)

Asua (27) and Arman Ali (28).

Condition of Asua and Arman

were critical. They were admit-

ted to Jessore General Hospital

local thana health complex.

Bagherpara thana.

20 shops of the bazar.

The rest three were admitted to

A case has been lodged with

25 BNP supporters

From Page 1

mates including women. They

also damaged and looted about

vocate Ruhul Quddus Talukder

Dulu, MP, alleged that police

had refused to receive a case

filed by his partymen. AL, how-

ever, filed a case and police ar-

OC of Baraigram thana and

district Police Super were not

rested three BNP workers.

available for comments.

District BNP secretary Ad-

The injured persons were

who attacked the labourers.

According to police, some

companies and Fls, it said.

The Banking Division

Executive Committee, it said.

The Bangladesh Bank

BB irregularities

by the simple application of chlorine, the purification process is subject to setbacks for a good many reasons which call for lengthy elaboration.

In one study on water supply by WASA to 12 areas of Dhaka city, none of the water samples examined were found to be excellent. Gross polluted samples were detected in Iskaton road Old Dhaka, Kazipara, Mohakhali quarters. Kalabagan areas. Among the 5 areas from where water samples were drawn from overhead tanks. Salimullah Road and Eskaton were found to be grossly pol

Lately apprehension has been expressed that the modernisation work of the country's only surface water plant at Chadnighat in the old part of the capital, though going on time, might not be able to supply safe drinking water Local people are skeptic about the safety of drinking water from the Chadnighat plant, but ade quacy of water rather than its

quality is their immediate con

Expressing concern about possible ground water arsenic contamination, the Depart ment of Environment said that if there was any incident of ground water contamination the possibility of surface water contamination could not be ruled out. The Chadnighat water treatment plant is close to Hazaribagh, the area known for leather industries. The Department of Environment are apprehensive that if the leather factories continue functioning without waste treatment plant for 5 to 6 years, not only the surface water but also the underground water would be at risk of chromium and other heavy chemical pollution.

### DSE move

garding recent price fall of major issues, former chairman of the DSE Khurshid Alam said that three factors contributed to the decline of the major market indicators

These are: Outflow of a huge amount of about Tk 500 crore from the secondary market for obtaining Initial Public Offerings (IPOs), government's order ernor, the Executive Board and to different bank and financial institutions for not giving loans against share certificates and suspension of 50 per cent In the future, all proposals to financial help to the investors give licenses to bank and Fls should be approved by the BB

> Regarding allegations raised by the general investors against DSE members who are the only registered brokers on the floor, the DSE chairman said. "We have decided to examine the books which are mandatory to be kept at every brokerage house, by auditing through an

Imtiyaz categorically denied that there was any forward sale on the floor by foreign investors or DSE members saying that it was banned.

"If any one does it outside the market, the DSE authorities have no responsibility for that," Imtivaz added.

### Suicide

Bashar, a teacher of the Department of Arabic and Persian Language of the Dhaka Universit; Raihan was a second year student of the Marketing Department.

dent, Nazmul Islam, 26, son of

### From Page

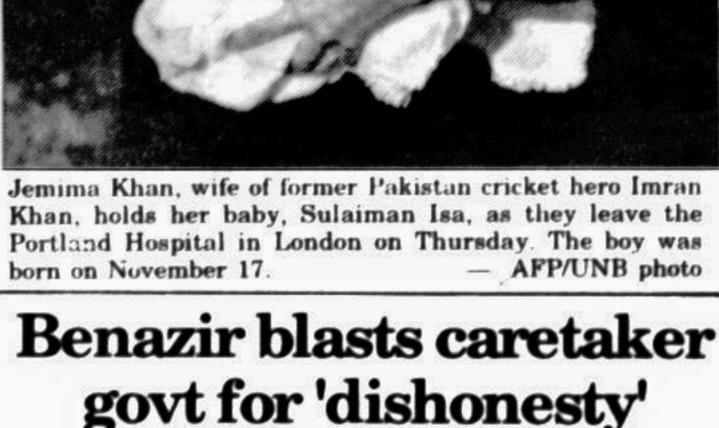
by an Investment Corporation

of Bangladesh (ICB). independent body.

From Page 1

Police quoting family sources said that Raihan was suffering from mental disorder. BSS adds: In another inci-

late Hasanul Islam, reportedly committed suicide by hanging from a ceiling fan at a mess under Dhanmondi police station Thursday evening. Nazrul hailed from village Khabir Bari under Kotwali thana of Barisal.



ISLAMABAD, Nov 22: For mer Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto Thursday lashed out at the caretaker government for arresting her polit ical secretary and a former minister, hours after a superior court had quashed their deten

tion orders, reports AFP The court order was based on "justice." but the interim gov ernment led by caretaker Prime Minister Malik Meraj Khalid has revealed its "dishonesty. by re-arresting them, a party officials quoted her as saying.

Benazir's political secretary Naheed Khan and her ex-minister Nawaz Khokar were arrested late Thursday, hours after their release from Adyala jail in nearby Rawalpindi city on La hore High Court order, a spokesman for the deposed

premier's party said. Khan has been kept at the police station for women in

Rawalpindi, he said Police source confirmed the arrest of the two Benazir associates but did not specify

charges against them. Khokar who was minister for science and technology in Bhutto's cabinet was also whisked away by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) shortly after he came out of the jail, the spokesman said.

Khokar was earlier arrested on Sunday and Khan was taken into custody two days later.

### 6 tribunals

From Page 1 will cease to exist as soon as a gazette notification on forma tion of the six divisional election tribunals is made, the sources noted.

A total of 63 complaints were lodged with the election tribunals following the June 12 general elections.



concluding function of a two-day workshop on 'Stock Exchange' organised by Investors' Forum, Sylhet, at the divisional headquarters yesterday.

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#### ATP service

#### Barisal pourasava to sell 30 tickets of each flight

From Staff Correspondent BARISAL. Nov 22: The Barisal Pourasava has taken responsibility of selling 30 tickets out of 70 of every Bangladesh Biman flight operating in Dhaka-Barisal route.

This was announced by Ahsan Habib Kamal, Chairman of Barisal Pourasava, at a press conference here today. He bought 30 tickets today. The Pourasava chairman

urged the Biman authorities to arrange once-a-day flight in the route instead of once-a-week schedule and to change the flight's time schedule from af ternoon to morning, particularly in the winter season.

route on December 3 last year

However, Biman is sched flight from Sunday next. Tak 2:50 pm. It will leave Barisal at 3:52 pm for Dhaka every Sun-

### 3 BCL activists held with arms in Khulna

KHULNA, Nov 22: Three Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists were arrested here today on charges of keeping illegal arms.

Ali Road. A sawed-off SBL gun and four live cartridges were recovered from them, police said. Rakib is a student of class ten of Lions School, while

Khulna City College. BCL activists Selim Chow-

dhury, 22, from New Market area and recovered a pipegun from his possession. Two separate cases have been lodged with Kotwali and

Sonadanga thana.

### Russian Security chief meets Chechen leaders

ers today to make final prepareported, says AFP.

Rybkin, Moscow's head negotiator, planned to "complete preparations for the visit of Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and the head of the (Chechen) coalition governmen Aslan Maskhadov," a source close to Rybkin told Interfax.

### Rao supporters

party general secretaries. No

Congress chief after he was charged with cheating, bribery and forgery in three separate

The courts have granted him

in mounting on him to resign as the chairman of the Congress Party's 136-member delegation in Parliament, his last influential post. Rao's control over the party

decades. Rao, 75, is the first former or

sitting Indian prime minister ever to face criminal trial in India.

The main organiser of the

stripping women should know

how they would feel when their

Officials here ordered

nude-cut out is shown."

BS Yediyurappa said.

# Taliban down Dostam's jet as fighting continues

ISLAMABAD. Nov 22: The Taliban militia todav shot down a jet belonging to Uzbek warlord Abdul Rashid Dostam as fighting flared up between the two forces in the northwestern Afghan province of Badhis Taliban officials said, reports

The Islamic militia brought down the jet with the help of a stinger missile while it was bombing their positions in Morghab district in Badhis. a Taliban spokesman told the Pakistan based Afghan Islamic Press (AIP)

No independent confirmation of the Taliban claim was immediately available

The portable stinger surfaceto-air missiles were supplied to the Afghan guerilla groups by western countries during their 1979-89 war against the Soviet Red army in Afghanistan

Afghan sources said a Hezb-Islami faction commander Hassan handed at least 19 shoulder-carried stingers to the Taliban when they overran former Alghan premier Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's key eastern base of Sarobi ahead of capturing Kabul in September The Taliban today warned they had sufficient numbers of stinger missiles, the private

news agency AIP said. It quoted Taliban officials in western Herat province as say ing that the pilot of the jet Najeebullah, had been arrested.

### Husbands

From Page 1

the marriages at the lower level of the society are conducted. "In majority of the cases, marriages among the slum dwellers are conducted unofficially When we try to get hold of a cul prit husband, he categorically denies any link with the woman with whom he probably passed several years of conjugal life, said a woman sub-inspec tor of police. She added that in the absence of any official marriage certificate, the oppressed woman did not have a chance of getting justice.

Next in the list are cases of kidnapping, said the official. "We get reports from parents about their school-going daughters being kidnapped, but in most cases we find out that the girls themselves go away with their Romeos.

Most of the victims are from the lower income groups wives of rickshwapullers, day labourers, garments workers and other like them, police

"Since this is the only cell dealing exclusively with women and children, we have women coming to us from the city's Sabujbagh, Motijheel, Pallabi and also from as far as Brahmanbaria." said an official. Inside the office room of the

cell. Taslima. aged about 25 and mother of two. from Kazi Road slum in Mirpur, showing a bunch of hair said, "My addict husband beat me up and pulled out this bunch of hair from my skull. He has been beating me frequently for over a year, he neither gives me any support money nor does he care for the children. The officials advised Tasli-

ma to lodge a complaint and told these correspondents that they would soon summon her husband and try to solve the problem through verbal warning. "If that does not work, we will go for further action," one of them added. The OC of Mirpur thana said

that the number of cases relating to repression on women was rising steadily as more and more people were getting information about such an exclusive cell.

Taliban officials said the air strikes came as Dostam forces lost some 10 kilometres of ground including Akazai village north of Morghab late Thursday to the Taliban. AP adds: Numerous explo-

sions and the vicious rattle of machine guns shook the front line north of Kabul today as troops loval to Dostum mounted an attack and the Taliban responded with heavy rocket fire.

The two-pronged assault started early today and throughout the day heavy artillery fire could be heard, but it doesn't appear either side lost ground

We are not equipped for winter fighting and that's why our enemy is constantly attacking," said Zamin Mula Kahar, a Taliban commander at an observation post. They are trying to keep us busy Behind him, a powerful

multi-barrel rocket launcher was spitting rockets into the clear blue winter sky.

#### Car bomb blast in Kashmir: One killed, 16 hurt SRINAGAR, Nov 22: A car

bomb exploded near the police headquarters in Kashmir's capital city today, killing at least one person and injuring 16 others, witnesses and police said. reports AP. No one immediately claimed

campaigning for Kashmir's secession from India. The insurrection has claimed 15,000 lives since 1989. Four of the wounded were policemen and the rest civilians. said a police officer. Police

responsibility, but police

blamed separatist militants

dentified the fatality as Mohammad Ashraf Mir. 32. a local resident The bomb failed to ignite a

gasoline station about 100 meters (yards) away. Elections to the Jammu-Kashmir state government were

held early last month, ending seven years of rule by the federal government, India had hoped the restoration of a popular government would help end the violence.

# Tariff cuts

From Page 1 from such measures.

During the recent visit of Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad to India, the Indian government had provided a definite timetable for the implementation of its decision on tariff reduction on 14 categories of Bangladesh exportables.

Referring to prevailing investment climate in Bangladesh Sami called upon indian entrepreneurs to avail of the privileges and facilities being extended by Bangladesh to joint ventures and foreign investments. Indian investment in Bangladesh, he said. would enjoy the additional advantage of importing into India.

## Queen Sophia

From Page 1 views on the importance of micro-credit in poverty allevia-

During her stay, the Queen will visit some Grameen Bank projects and meet with their members at Sonargaon in Narayanganj, Rajshahi and Siraigani.

She will also visit archeological site and historical places of interest at Sonargaon Folk Museum. Ahsan Manjil. Paharpur, Barind Museum and National Museum.

Queen Sophia will leave

Dhaka on Wednesday.

#### Singaporean investors per cent increase over the same izur Rahman, Manjurul Islam

and Abdul Awal Tofael Ahmed while stating

liberalisation of trade, investment and financial policies of Bangladesh, urged Singaporean investors to set up a industrial park in Bangladesh. He requested the Singaporean investors and businessmen to invest in Bangladesh in energy. electronics, composite textile, real estate, telecommunica tions and other infrastructural

The industries minister also dwelt at length the investment policy of the present government which offers the foreign investors various facilities including tax holiday, 100 per cent repatriation of savings and personal assets, tax incentives on import of machinery and raw materials.

Balagopal Nair, director of Singapore's Trade Development Board, told the seminar Bangladesh's low labour and land costs and provision for 100 per cent foreign equity or ownership of industrial investments made it an attractive

He said Bangladesh exported 2.83 billion dollars worth of products including clothing. jute goods and fishery products between July 1995 and February 1996, marking an eight per cent between July 1995 and February 1996, marking an eight

period in 1994/95.

#### Totael Ahmed met separately the exclusive group of American investors interested to invest in Bangladesh. The well-attended seminar

was a clear manifestation of the Singaporean investors interest in Bangladesh, the message The one-to-one discussions on trade and investment be-

tween the investors and businessmen of Bangladesh and Singapore were held in a friendly and cordial atmosphere after the seminar. They discussed various joint venture projects and investment in Bangladesh. Tofael in his interview given

to Singapore Television. Asian Business News (TV). Singapore Radio and The Strait Times highlighted the policy of the present government under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The success and the positive

outcome of the seminar will bring in more investments from Singapore to Bangladesh and at the same time help im prove the image of Bangladesh in Singapore, the message added. Singapore seminar is part of

government's effort to increase foreign investment in the country through talks and dis-

#### KN Shashikala, a virulent tival of Britain in 1951 by her From Page 1 critic and the head of the husband Eric. Mahila Jagran (women's awaklowed on the city streets. Our ac-She said the protests includtivists will be putting up road-

would be telecast live tomorrow night to at least 2.9 billion people in 115 countries and stressed it was a golden chance to showcase Bangalore — India's

silicon valley.

The much-touted internaglitter remained tional ephemeral with the only attending celebrities being fading British actor Oliver Reed and the vice-president of the Indian Ocean island of Seychelles.

Earlier, upbeat reports had spoken of a star-studded audience, headed by the Sultan of Brunei, the world's richest man, and assorted British royalty.

The winner, to be picked by 11 judges — ranging from a test cricketer to a beer baron to an Indian socialitie, will be crowned by current Miss World Jacqueline Aguilera of Venezuela. Julia Morley, vice-president

of Miss World International,

said this was the worst year for

the event, started during the fes-

ing threats of self-immolations

and bombings were the 'most virulent ever.' We have never had these kinds anywhere. The girls ... feel sad and concerned.' Bangalore police chief Sarat

Chandra Burma said security was 'unprecedented' in this city of five million, adding that preventive arrests would be made to pre-empt violence. I will not say when we are going to start taking these peo-

nitely on the cards, he said. We have identified some individuals and groups. We are closely observing (them) and keeping a watch.

ple into custody but it is defi-

Visitors to the stadium are frisked thrice and have to pass through metal detectors. Tracker dogs and bomb squads periodically check the stadium. where fire extinguishers have been installed to guard against self-immolations.

ening) forum said she and 14 other colleagues would burn themselves to death to protest the 'obscenity and vulgarity the pageant will promote in the country.

whether we are doing anything immoral.

The Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has, meanwhile, said that only 'the organisers, the police and the contestants and not the people to Bangalore would fill the stadium.

tion party in Karnataka state.

announced a 24-hour shutdown tomorrow. "Nobody and nothing except

Mayor Alhaj ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury attended the function as special guest Assistant High Commis sioner of India in Bangladesh SK Bharma. Commissioner of Chittagong Division Shakowat Hossain and Deputy Commissioner K M Habibullah, spoke

on the occasion. State minister, in his opening speech, recalled the contributions of India during the country's Liberation War led by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Majibur Rahman He said the existing friendly relations between the two countries would be further strengthened through the cul-

Both were released Thursday

Naheed Khan was earlier

afternoon after the Lahore High

Court declared their detention

picked up from Islamabad air

port as she arrived with the

former premier from Karachi

Officials had earlier said she

was taken into custody under a

provincial law allowing pre-

ventive detention of people

considered a threat to public se-

India Festival

begins in Ctg

day long "India Festival-96" be-

gan at the Engineers' Institu-

and Manpower M A Mannan

inaugurated the festival as chief

guest while Chittagong city

tion here today, reports BSS.

CHITTAGONG, Nov 22: A six

State Minister for Labour

orders illegal

on Tuesday

tural exchange programmes. Later, the traditional dance of Andhra Pradesh, 'Kuchipudi' based on life of Lord Sree Krishna, was presented by eminent dance couple Raja and Radha Reddy



— Star photo

#### Miss World contest in Bangalore tonight milkmen, water supply and fire brigade personnel will be al-

truck today and drove it around Shashikala has spurned peace offers by Indian film legthe city, while denouncing the end Amitabh Bachchan, the gangly actor. owner of ABCL, to 'come and have a look at the show and protest, Vatal Nagraj, told re-

"I am accessible all the time and ready for talks with the protesters," he added.

schools closed today and tomorrow to keep children at home in case of violence by opponents of the beauty pageant. "A holiday has been declared as a precautionary measure in view of the protests against The BJP, the main opposi-

Miss World pageant. But offices will function normally on both statement.

these days," said a government

After the inception of flight operation by Biman in this the service became irregular for various reasons and lately, the flight was suspended showing the reason of passenger-short

uled to resume its once-a-week Dhaka-Barisal-Dhaka ATP ing off from Dhaka at 2:20 pm the Biman flight will reach Barisal's Rahmatpur Airport at

# From Staff Correspondent

Two BCL activists Rakib, 18 and Tarikul Islam Shiblu, 20, were arrested from Khanjahan

Shiblu is a first year student of Police also arrested another

MOSCOW, Nov 22: Russian Security Council Secretary Ivan Rybkin met with Chechen leadrations for a long-awaited meeting between the Russian and Chechen premiers, Intertax

From Page 1 Mauraya, Devendra Dwivedi and Janardhana Poojary as

reasons were given. Rao stepped down as the

bail in all the cases but pressure

began diminishing after he led the party in May to its worst electoral defeat in the last five

blocks all over." BJP state chief PTI said members of a Hindu organisation fixed a nude cut out of Amitabh Bachchan on a

porters: "People who support destination.

cussions to persuade the investors to come to Bangladesh.

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