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Former addicts advisers in anti-drug campaign

By Govinda Shil

The Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) will launch a motivational campaign to contain the ever increasing problem of drug smuggling and drug abuse, official sources said.

Former drug addicts, who are now leading normal life will act as advisers in the campaign which will include TV films and other motivational programmes through the media focusing on drug abuse. NGOs will also be involved in the campaign, the sources said adding that shortage of manpower and funds were hindering DNC's efforts to control drug abuse in the country. A total of 450 out of 1274 posts in the DNC are new vacant, they added.

The Department's patrol works and other operational activities were being hampered due to shortage of manpower and other logistic support, a senior official of the DNC said. The DNC head office has only four vehicles which is too inadequate for its operational activities, he said.

"We contribute about 25 crore to the national exchequer per year, but we are given only six to seven crore taka," he said.

He said that huge amounts of narcotics were being smuggled into the country which could not be recovered due to the poor logistic facilities, he said a national survey should be conducted to ascertain the severity of the problem.

A recent sample survey in the Dhaka, Chittagong and Rajshahi metropolitan areas revealed that the highest rate of drug abuse was among the transport workers, followed by unemployed youths and sex workers.

According to figures available from the DNC, law-enforcing agencies seized 6,672 kgs of ganja, opium, heroin, cocaine, charash and bakhar in the last three years when 9,338 drug-related cases were filed. Some 67,690 litres of liquid narcotics like liquor, phensidyl, tari, za-uva and home-made wine were seized in 1996 compared to 82,353 litres in 1995.

Police filed a total of 3,004 drug-related cases in 1996 compared to 2,812 in 1995, showing a rise of 6.82 per cent. They filed 559 cases in the first two months of 1997, according to the DNC figures.

JCD, BCL clash in Sirajganj

SIRAJGANJ, Apr 22: At least 10 persons were injured when the activists of BCL and JCD clashed here this afternoon, reports UNB.

Police picked up four activists for their involvement in the clash.

Witnesses said the clash between the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) began at about 9:30 am in a sequel to a trouble over enjoying a movie at local Moushami Cinema Hall three days back.

Sources said JCD leader Shamim was beaten up by some BCL activists on Sunday.

Since then, activists of both the organisations had engaged in sporadic clashes in Sirajganj town's Mahmudpur and Sayadhangara mahallars.

Ctg JCD leader held with pistol

CHITTAGONG, Apr 22: Police arrested a Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal leader along with a pistol, loaded with two bullets, from Ambagan in the port city last night, reports UNB.

On-duty police of Double-mooring thana halted city JCD vice president and former VP of Pahartali College Students Union, Shaiful Islam Swapan, while he was returning home by a motorbike about 30 minutes past midnight.

During a search, police found the pistol and bullets from Swapan's possession. He was sent to jail when produced before the CMM Court today.

Police said Swapan was wanted in several cases, including the murder of a fire brigade worker and a retired assistant super of police.

20 injured in N'ganj clashes

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Apr 22: At least 20 people were injured, two of them with bullet, in two separate incidents of violence here today, witnesses said.

The two persons were hit with bullet in a gunfight between two groups of gamblers over share of money during gambling at West Talia under Fatulla thana. Three others were injured during the fight as the gamblers also exploded cocktails.

Bullet-hit Abul Hussain, 22, and Helal, 23, were admitted to Narayanganj Hospital.

In another incident, rival gangs, one from Paikpara and the other from Noapara under Narayanganj thana, clashed over taking bath at a canal at Noapara. Four persons were stabbed and 11 others received minor injuries during the clash as the miscreants used lethal weapons.

Masum, 18, Rama, 15, Kalu, 17, and Habib, 18, were taken to Narayanganj Hospital with stab injuries.

When contacted, police said none was arrested and no case was lodged in connection with the incidents.

Jalalabad Day observed

CHITTAGONG, Apr 22: Glowing tributes were paid to the legendary hero of the anti-British movement Masterda Surja Sen and his comrades in observance of the historic Jalalabad Day today, reports BSS.

On this day, Masterda and his companions fought the British soldiers in Jalalabad hill where the troops swooped down on them.

To mark the day, different organisations garlanded the statue of Surja Sen at the JM Sen Hall and held discussions.

Chittagong city chapter of Awami League held a discussion at its Darul Fazal Market office with its vice-president Dr Sayedur Rahman in the chair.

Awami League leaders Kazi Enamul Haq Danu, Mohammad Khalequzzaman, Badrul Alam, Belayet Hossain, SK Chowdhury, and Iftekar Saimun Chowdhury participated in the discussion.

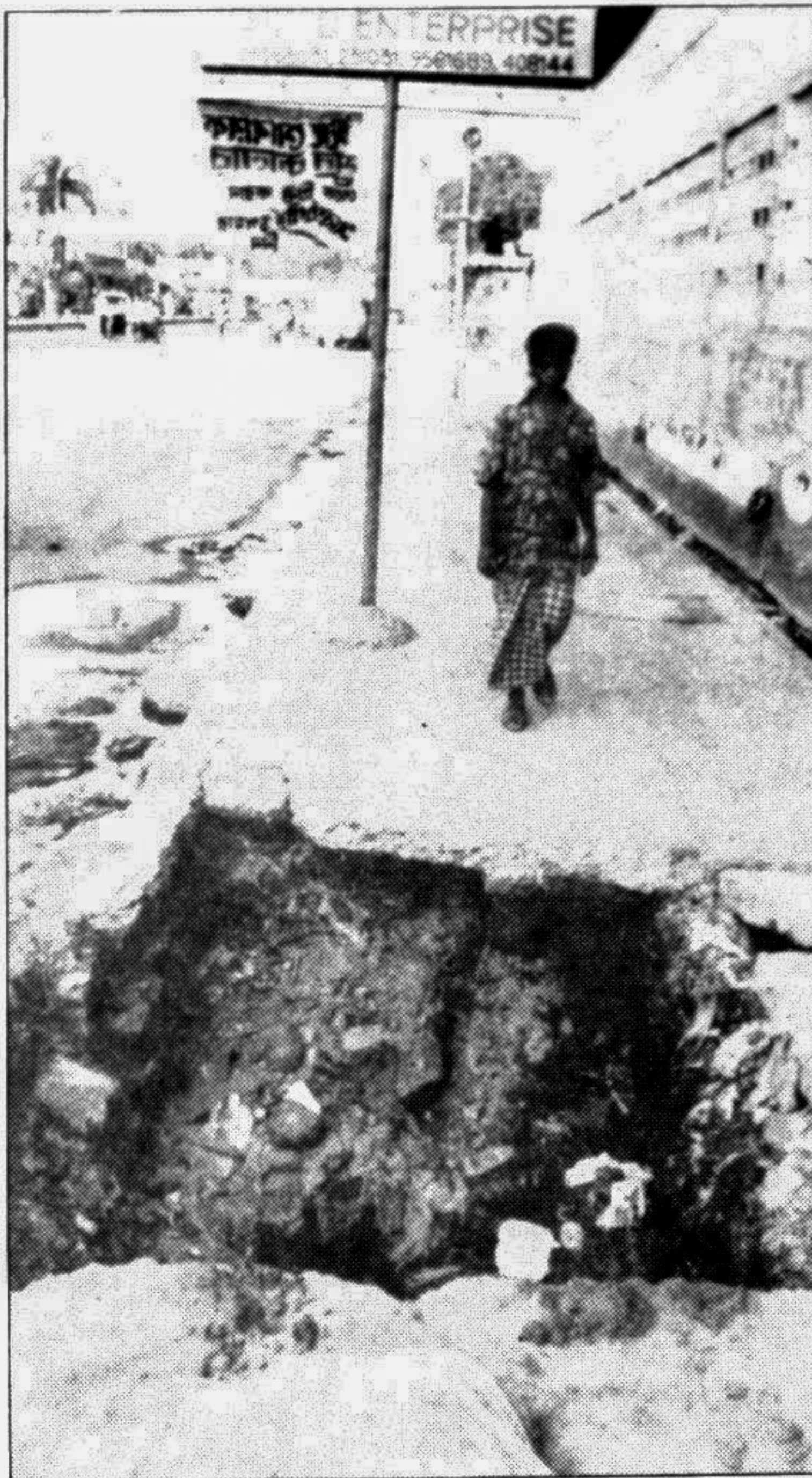
SAARC summit

From Page 1
tion for the welfare of more than one billion people in the region, besides adopting SAPTA, an arrangement liberalising trade among the member countries.

The forum, grouping Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, had also adopted convention on curbing drug abuse and child trafficking as well as action programmes for the welfare of women and children.

The three-day summit will be preceded by a meeting of the Council of Ministers to finalise the agenda of the summit.

Foreign Secretaries and senior officials of seven member countries will hold meetings in Male in the first week of May to prepare the programmes of the conference which will review progress of the 13-year-old association and endorse new course of action.



A veritable death trap on the footpath along the road in front of the DB office at Malibag in the city. — Star photo

'Govt to make country basket case again'

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said the present government was going to make the country a "basket case" again by destroying its economy, reports UNB.

"ESCAP has admitted that the economy was stronger during the BNP period," he said while exchanging views with the party leaders of Patuakhali district at the BNP office in the city yesterday.

Bhuiyan alleged that the government in its 10-month rule had reduced the economy to a "skeleton" allowing Indian "marwari" businessmen to loot thousands of crores of taka from share market.

"Now it is allowing them to loot hides of sacrificial animals worth Tk 500 crore," he said.

He alleged that the govern-

Accident kills one

Rail link disrupted for 6 hrs in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Apr 22: A tempo collided with a railway engine at Isphani level crossing under Pahartoli thana this afternoon leaving its driver killed and three passengers injured.

The driver was identified as Jalal Ahmed, 35.

Railway police said the shunting engine hit the tempo at around 1:30 pm while it was crossing the railway lines.

Angered by the accident, a mob put barricade on the lines disrupting rail communications for six hours until 7:30 pm, police said.

The train movement resumed after the mob lifted the barricade following a meeting between the railway authorities and local leaders.

20 shops gutted in Nabiganj

HABIGANJ, Apr 22: A devastating fire burnt down some 20 shops at the thana Sadar bazar of Nabiganj in the district early today, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the blaze, originating from a grocery at 5:30 am, raged through other shops and gutted goods worth an estimated Tk 1.5 crore.

Firefighters from district headquarters and Moulvibazar rushed to the spot and extinguished the flame after a two-hour combat.

Gujral wins confidence vote

From Page 1
dambaram to return.

"I appeal to you, please come back and take charge," he said.

Chidambaram, the darling of industry in India and abroad, unveiled a bold tax-cutting budget in February, increasing the pace of reforms first launched in 1991.

But he was forced to step down after his regional party, a key part of the previous administration, said it would not join the new government after its chief lost to Gujral in an acrimonious front leadership contest.

Chidambaram, urged by one speaker after another to return to the fold, refused to commit himself today but asked the new government to pass his budget into law next month.

"Please pass the Chidambaram budget," he said.

The House was adjourned until April 30 after the vote. Gujral had opened the confi-

dence vote debate by calling for national consensus after weeks of political chaos, culminating in the fall of the previous front coalition on April 11.

"Let us all promise to run the government through consensus," he said.

The 77-year-old former diplomat, who has retained the cabinet of the last front government but kept the finance minister's job vacant, said there would be no shift in policy.

He backed the last government's economic policies, adding: "We will keep the foreign policy of the previous government, expand it and strengthen it... we will form new relations with our neighbours."

He also appealed to the Hindu fundamentalist opposition to rally behind the coalition, saying: "We are not enemies."

The former minority Front coalition fell when the

Pak govt won't fund film on Jinnah

KARACHI, Apr 22: The Pakistan government has withdrawn promised funding worth around 1.5 million dollar for a film on the life of the country's founder Mohammad Ali Jinnah, a minister said today.

"We feel that government should not be involved in the business of the film-making," advisor for information Mushahid Hussain told AFP, explaining the government's decision.

Hussain said the decision was taken after he met with the movie producer Akbar S Ahmed, who plans to release the film on August 14, Pakistan's Independence Day.

"We reached a consensus that it would be in the interest of credibility of the film that the government not fund the movie."

"Any funds that are required for the completion of the movie would be generated from private contributions and donations," he said.

The film has been criticised by a section of the Pakistani media which objected to its script and to selection of Hollywood star Christopher Lee, best known for his "Dracula" role to play Jinnah.

93 massacred in Algeria

ALGIERS, Apr 22: An armed group massacred 93 villagers including women and children, early today, in the bloodiest such attack since the start of an Islamic insurgency five years ago, authorities said, reports AP.

Security forces announced without comment the death toll in the pre-dawn massacre in the village of Haouch Mokfi, near Bougara, about 20 kilometers south of Algiers.

Members of a family who fled the area described the heavily armed group as Islamic guerrillas. They said the group began killing villagers because they refused to "collaborate."

Armed groups depend for their survival on the aid of simple citizens who provide food, money and other necessities.

"We have no more to give. They've already taken everything," said one member of the family which arrived in the capital. He and his kin spoke on condition of anonymity.

No further details were immediately available.

Village massacres around Algiers have become a prevalent form of violence since the start of the insurgency.

The Haouch Mokfi massacre was the biggest single mass killing since the birth of the insurgency after the army cancelled January 1992 legislative elections to thwart a victory by an Islamic fundamentalist party. At least 60,000 people have been killed in the conflict between security forces and militants.

President Liamine Zeroul has scheduled the first legislative vote since then for June 5.

JP rebel leaders discuss action plan today

By Staff Correspondent

The three rebel leaders of Jatiya Party will sit today at the residence of Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury to discuss their next course of action if the expulsion of Kazi Zafar Ahmed is not withdrawn, sources concerned said.

JP chief H M Ershad held a meeting with party Secretary General Anwar Hossain Manju and Nazimur Rahman Manju last night at the residence of Nazimur Rahman.

The meeting was held as the 11 mid-ranking party leaders mediating for a solution to the present crisis were reportedly told by the rebels that they would not meet Ershad unless Zafar's expulsion was withdrawn. The outcome of the meeting could not be known.

Shah Moazzam Hossain, spokesman for the three rebel leaders, when contacted, said that they would meet Ershad only after the expulsion of Kazi Zafar was withdrawn.

Hail storm

From Page 1
from Sherpur: Hailstorm accompanied with gusty wind lashed Sherpur town and its adjoining areas yesterday afternoon affecting standing Boro crops.

The hailstorm, starting at about 5 pm, lasted for about 15 minutes whitening the area.

District agriculture officer Kazi Ataul Haq told The Daily Star that at least five per cent Boro crop was damaged by the hailstorm.

Strong JEC

From Page 1

each other in the fields of agriculture, communications and industrial sector, she told the Thai Deputy Foreign Minister.

The Thai minister said Bangladesh and Thailand could share their experiences in the field of textiles, electronics, pharmaceutical industry, hospital management and building orchard and fruit management.

There is also scope for bilateral cooperation in the field of fishing installing aqua industries, poultry farms and rice cultivation, he said.

Arrest warrant protested

From Page 1

In international financial markets and with multilateral financial agencies such as the World Bank, IFC and ADB with whom Runa had excellent relationships."

The Peregrine Chairman further said, "Runa had been an ardent advocate of reform of the Bangladeshi financial and capital markets which she recognised as being inefficient and corrupt... in addition to the work she has done for Bangladeshi businesses she is currently the advisor to three multinationals who between them were planning to bring US\$ 1.5 billion of investment into Bangladesh; this would have represented the biggest ever private sector investment in Bangladesh... as for Peregrine, I assure you that we will do everything in our power to protect our employees from the false accusations made against them."

In his reply, Dr Haroonur

Int'l Rain Water Catchment Confc begins in Iran

A five-day International Rain Water Catchment Conference began in Tehran on Monday, reports UNB.

Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani inaugurated the 8th International Conference, being participated by some 60 countries, according to a message received in Dhaka today.

A three-member Bangladesh delegation, led by Food and Agriculture Minister Begum Motia Chowdhury, is attending the conference.

The other members of the delegation are Dilara Harun MP and Bangladesh Ambassador to Iran Syed Moazzam Ali.

Earlier, Begum Motia Chowdhury visited the Iranian Institute of Forestry and Range-Land Management and Research Institute which maintains a rich collection of 1.25 lakh species of plants and vegetation.

Showing keen interest in the various stages of research projects in Iran, she discussed the possibilities of joint collaboration and assistance between Bangladesh and Iran in the fields of forestry, community forestry and water conservation.

Runa Laila

From Page 1

missal of the case as per the law which states: "Where the defendant appears and the plaintiff does not appear when the suit is called for hearing, the court shall make an order that the case be dismissed."

Plinik is still legally married to Runa.

Amir said Runa had filed a divorce suit in the UK, which she later withdrew.

Another case filed by Runa to annul the marriage is pending with Dhaka's Second Sub-Judge Court.

BTV's attitude

From Page 1

BTV's April 5 invitation came as a follow up of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's offer to discuss with the Leader of the Opposition the national issues in a live TV programme. Hasina made the offer on March 31, while talking to the editors of national dailies and news agencies in the city.

When contacted, State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed said that BTV was eager to cover events no whether those were of AL, BNP or JP, on the basis of their news value.

He alleged that on a number of occasions BTV crew were not allowed to cover BNP programmes. Despite repeated requests from BTV for BNP scheduled programmes it did not get any response. He, however, pointed out that unlike the previous occasions, BTV covered the Eid-reception hosted by Begum Zia on April 18 and faced no bar.

BB governor

From Page 1

der criminal procedure code by formulating new laws," he said.

The Governor mentioned that the banking sector was burdened with outstanding loans to the tune of Tk 13,000 crore, of which Tk 5,000 crore remained with 137 defaulters, who, despite their ability, were not repaying the public money.

He called for strengthening the legal framework for loan recovery in order to build a stronger banking system, which is needed for infusing dynamism in the economy.

The central bank governor said strict banking laws existed in all countries across the world. "It is unthinkable in any country that anybody does not repay loans with interest. But, in our country, we are unable to create such situation."

BB deputy governors MI Khan, Dr Mohammad Sohrab Uddin and Ataul Haq, managing directors of scheduled banks and high bank officials were present in the meeting and expressed their opinion for amending banking laws.

Cricketers

From Page 1

ate member of ICC, is almost certain to get the One Day International (ODI) status in the next ICC meeting in London on the first week of June.

In its meeting tomorrow, the BCB will take necessary steps to prepare the national team for the coming Asia Cup Cricket featuring host Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh from July 15-31.

A source close to national coach Gordon Greenidge informed that some new methods of training would be introduced for the national team to get accustomed with modern cricket.

In the first or second week of May, Bangladesh cricket team may go to Cox's Bazar, not for any vacation but as part of their training on the sea beach.

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Opposing ideologies

From Page 1

right. "But we do not need to go for unity with those who had opposed the country's war of liberation in 1971," he said, arguing that such moves would isolate the party from thousands of people who dislike both the AL and the Jamaat on separate grounds.

While struggling against the 'autocratic practices' of the Awami League, we should rather try to win the hearts of the "secular nationalist forces," who dislike Awami League for its "inherent intolerance to its political opponents," and the parties like Jamaat-e-Islami that betrayed our national cause in 1971, the BNP leader said.

"Besides, the Jamaat is not a dependable friend, because the party is destined to seek AL friendship due to its misdeeds during our liberation war and this has been proved more than once over the last couples of years," another leader of the BNP's left camp noted.

This section of the BNP leadership is also of the opinion that the party should go slow in taking to the streets. On the other hand, the BNP leaders with rightwing political background assert that the party should now go for unity with all the anti-Awami League forces, irrespective of their political past.

"We need to organise all the anti-Awami League forces to free the people from the clutches of the AL," a BNP leader known as a top brass of its right wing camp, said, arguing that the division of the people on the pro-liberation and anti-liberation lines would eventually benefit the Awami League.

Revised quota

From Page 1

into effect from March 26 last. The rates of other quotas are: 45 per cent on merit for class I posts, 10 per cent for women, 5 per cent for tribals and 10 per cent for general candidates of districts.

For the posts of class III and IV, 10 per cent for orphanage residents and disabled, 15 per cent for women, 5 per cent for tribals, 10 per cent for Ansar and village defence party members and the rest 30 per cent for the general candidates of districts.

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Making an oblique reference to the 'official' party leadership's alleged soft-corner towards the left leaning parties, another right wing BNP leader said, "The Left Democratic Front has no political base. Besides, the Front has time and again displayed its weakness to the Awami League."

The Left Front had turned down the invitation to attend the solidarity conference because of Jamaat's participation in it.