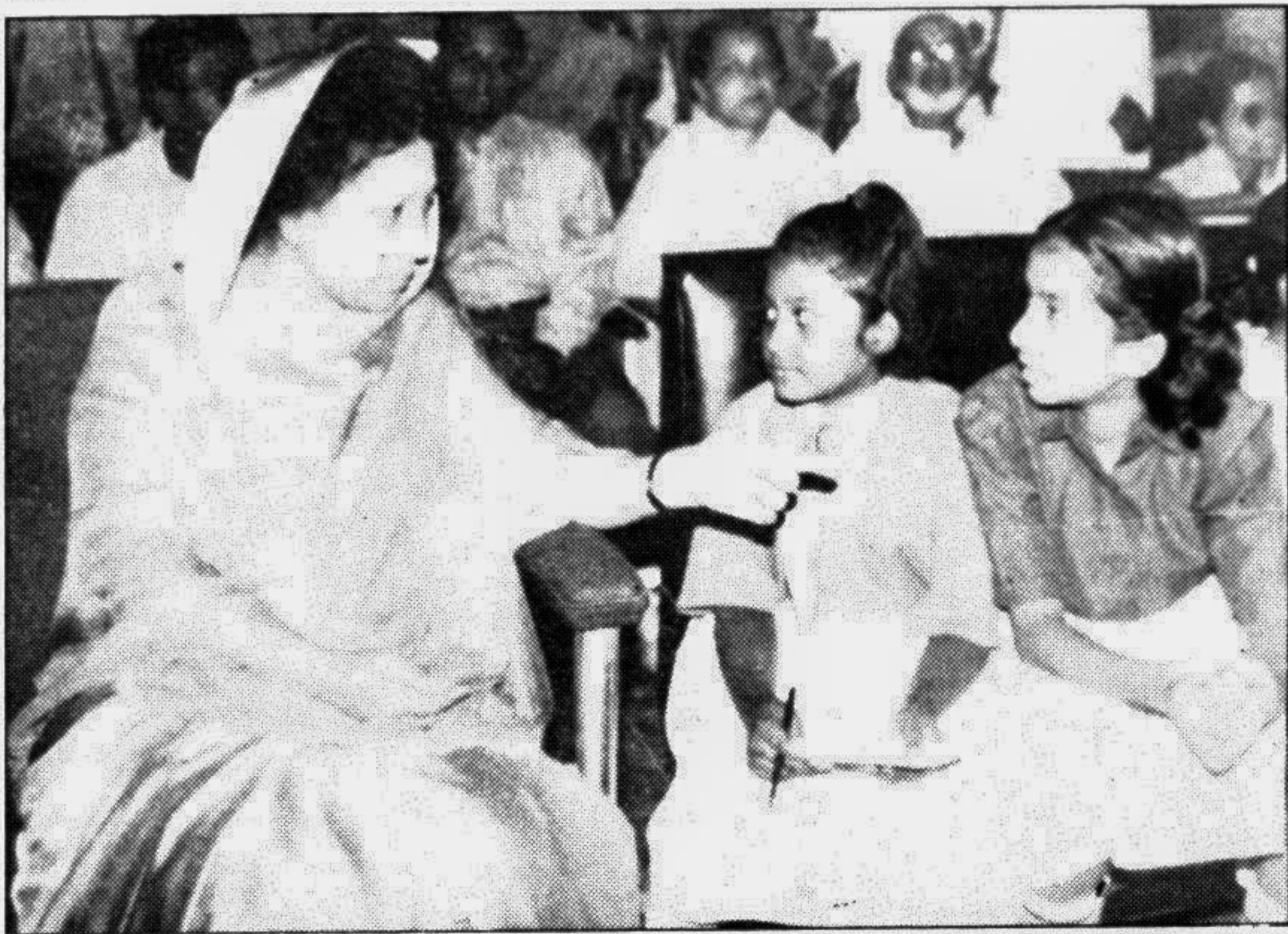


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BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in parliament Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday talking to some children at a discussion meeting organised by Zia Shishu Kishore Sangathan at Bangladesh Shishu Academy auditorium on Zia's death anniversary. — Star photo

Govt desperate to protect interest of India: BNP

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday said the Awami League, which came to power after seeking apology to the people, has again started the politics of what he alleged killing and repression, reports UNB.

He was addressing a discussion meeting at Shibpur in Narsingdi, organised on the occasion of the first death anniversary of JCD leader Rafique, said a party press release.

Rafique was killed at Uttar Shadharchar last year, allegedly by the 'terrorists' of the Awami League.

The BNP secretary general alleged that the previous Awami League regime had killed 30,000 patriotic people, put another 60,000 in jails, and resorted to repression and reign of terror.

The Awami League has again adopted its past role of repression, he said adding that jails in the country are again crammed with opposition leaders and activists while hundreds have been forced to leave their homes to escape arrest.

Criticising the subservient policy of the ruling party, Bhuiyan said the Awami League government has become desperate to protect the interest of India sacrificing the interest of the country.

Freedom of press, freedom of expression of individual, rule of law and sovereignty of judiciary are faced with serious threat, he added.

The BNP leader said repression and torture are coming down on those protesting the misdeeds of the government. The Awami League hatched a conspiracy to close those newspapers who are reporting the

15 injured in Rajshahi road accident

From Our Correspondent
RAJSHAHI, May 31: Fifteen persons were injured in a road accident at Daipara under Puthia thana this morning.

Four of the injured were sent to the Puthia Thana Health Complex.

Another injured, Muhsinul Alam, a teacher of the Rajshahi Teachers' Training College was admitted to the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

According to police the accident happened when a Dhaka bound coach of the Modern Enterprise fell into a ditch while giving side to a truck coming from the opposite direction.

JP council

From Page 1
ministry of party secretary general Anwar Hossain.

A section of party leaders reportedly voiced the demand that Anwar Hossain should not continue holding the vital post of party secretary general as he is a minister of the government.

Ctg port

From Page 1
The oil companies already enjoyed two-day weekend on Thursday and Friday as per previous practice. "But from this week we will change our weekend to Friday and Saturday," said an official.

The business houses and commercial enterprises in the city's main business hubs (Khatunganj and Agrabad) functioned as usual, sources said.

Officials of Chittagong Stock Exchange said due to bank holiday, floor trading could not take place today.

When contacted President of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry Jafrul Islam Chowdhury said that reaction of the chamber would be given after observation for two more days.

But Vice President of the chamber Kamal Uddin Ahmed giving his 'personal reaction,' said "Our losses will go up due to the announcement of two-day weekend as in fact, we are losing three days in the context of global communication for trade."

Chairman of Bangladeshiya Cha Sangsad (tea associations of Bangladesh) AQI Chowdhury, said "We are cut off from the other countries for almost four days a week, having adverse effect on our competitiveness with our neighbouring countries in production, marketing, export, shipping and banking. So the association had earlier pleaded to the government to revert to Sunday as weekly holiday in line with the rest of the world."

BNP demands

From Page 1
ernment decision might be to help "economic aggression" of a country. "It will also create social and economic problems in the country."

He felt that the two-day holiday would encourage reluctance to work instead of increasing efficiency of the officials and employees of the offices and industries.

Besides, he said, the new office timing would create an extra pressure on the city traffic causing immense sufferings to the city dwellers.

He said no Asian country has two-day weekly holiday as the developing nations cannot consider it suitable for them.

US Gen places wreath at Shikha Anirban

The visiting US Pacific Air Force Commander General John G Lorber and the members of his delegation visited the "Shikha Anirban", — the eternal flame, at the Dhaka Cantonment yesterday morning, an ISPR press release said, reports BSS.

He placed wreath at the "Shikha Anirban" in memory of the valiant martyrs of the armed forces who had sacrificed their lives during the War of Liberation in 1971.

General Lorber then visited the air headquarters where he was received by his counterpart Air Vice-Marshal Jamal Uddin Ahmed. He was presented with a Guard of Honour by a BAF contingent. He took salute and reviewed the guard. He was also introduced to the PSOS of the Bangladesh Air Force.

General Lorber stayed with the Chief of Air Staff for some time and discussed matters of mutual interest.

Later, the US Pacific Air Force Commander visited the naval headquarters where he called on the Chief of Naval Staff Rear Admiral Mohammad Nurul Islam. He also visited the army headquarters and called on the chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Muhammad Mahbubur Rahman.

General Lorber and the member of his delegation later visited the BAF-base Basharat in the Dhaka Cantonment.

Pre-budget meet

From Page 1
ferent aspects of the present condition of the economy and the discussion was "lively and constructive."

Kibria said all the ex-finance ministers and former finance secretaries were invited to the meeting. Of them, MA Muhi, M Syeduzzaman, Maj Gen (ret'd) MA Monem, Kafiluddin Mahmud and Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud were present.

Of the former finance secretaries, Khandaker Asaduzzaman MP, M Mostafizur Rahman, Golam Kibria and Nasimuddin Ahmed took part in the consultation.

They hoped that this kind of consultation would continue in the future, Kibria said.

CAAB official

From Page 1
tee on Friday submitted its report blaming lapse of the CAAB security for Mahbub's boarding the Airbus on May 23. It found Mahbub had climbed the aircraft from the runway which CAAB.

The CAAB official said: If finally it is proved that the accident occurred due to our fault, we would have no hesitation in accepting it. But the Biman attitude to shift all responsibilities to us is not acceptable.

The official also said now it is more important to check such kind of incidents in future. But Biman is yet to show any interest in this regard rather shifting responsibilities.

He informed that the five-member CAAB enquiry committee, headed by Group Captain Iqbal Hossain and comprising two officials from Biman, was waiting for autopsy reports from Saudi Arabia.

The committee chief already has faxed to Riyadh airport manager Al Jawadi and Bangladesh embassy in Saudi Arabia requesting to send the autopsy report as well as photograph of the body.

One held for 'raping' girl in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, May 31: A young man was arrested in Doublemooring thana here today allegedly for violating a teenage girl, reports UNB.

Police said Shahidul Islam Masud, 26, reportedly raped the girl at Hajipara Sawdagar Colony shortly after midnight Friday night.

He was produced before the CMM court which sent him to Chittagong Jail. The girl was in the court's safe-custody for undergoing medical test.

Re-excavation

From Page 1
wheat. The Relief Ministry allocated 16,000 tonnes of rice against the sanction of 20,000 MT of wheat, saying, the value of the allocated rice was equivalent to that of 20,000 tonnes of wheat.

The Relief Ministry calculated the price of rice at 25 per cent higher than that of wheat and issued the order for allocation of 16,000 MT rice, officials added.

The Water Resources Ministry, however, refuted this and said prices of rice and wheat were same in the market. It has requested the Ministry of Relief that the allocation of rice for the project should be made as per the market price.

'2-day holiday to have negative impact on economy'

By Julian Charles and Govinda Shil

A cross-section of people interviewed by The Daily Star yesterday expressed concern about the possible effects of the recently introduced two-day weekly holiday on the country's economy.

Many of them said they felt that Bangladesh could not afford the Saturday holiday, which came into effect yesterday.

Restaurant owner Jobaidur Rahman Milon said all industries, specially those in the private sector, would suffer due to the holiday. "We are interested in working 7 days a week. Holidays are for developed countries not developing countries," Milon said his restaurant had a very quiet day yesterday because most of his clients were garments factory executives and their offices remained closed.

Nurul Islam Patwary, Director of Peoples Insurance Company Ltd said no other country in the sub-continent had a two-day weekly holiday. Bangladesh should wait for at least another 100 years before contemplating such a luxury.

Kerb market trader at the Dhaka Stock Exchange Md Jamal Uddin said his business also suffered. "Nobody wants this holiday, it is bad for Bangladesh. We are a developing country; we can't afford it."

Assistant Manager of Modhuhita Cinema Md Akbar Hossain agreed with Jamaluddin's observations. He said the Saturday holiday might be good for his own business, since more people would go to the movies, but its effects on the country could be bad. "We are a poor country. We need more work", he said.

Hossain said Bangladesh should conform to the international weekend for economic reasons.

Nurul Huq Sikdar Vice-President of Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) said personally he believes the two-day weekly holiday will further impede the export-oriented garments industry since it has to work with banks, the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) and customs houses. He said the holiday would also hamper the industry's import of raw materials — fabrics and accessories.

Sikdar said: "We cannot complete our work in seven days. So we are really worried about what the five-day week will mean for us."

Nurul Islam, a 52-year old rickshaw-puller said his earnings yesterday were half of what he would normally make. "I own my rickshaw. But I know people who rent their rickshaws for Tk 40 to 50 a day. They will suffer even more."

A tea vendor at Motijheel, Humayun Kabir, also said he only made 50 per cent of his normal daily sales yesterday.

Only Traffic Police Sergeant Mizanur Rahman found something positive to say about the new holiday. "Traffic has decreased on the holiday which has taken a lot of pressure off us," he said.

One held with counterfeit currency notes

From Our Correspondent
JHENIDAH, May 31: Police arrested one person from a night coach at Hatgopalpur under sadar thana last night for allegedly possessing two counterfeit currency notes of five hundred taka denomination.

Police said, the arrested man was identified as Rezaul Islam, 40, of Shibanj thana of Chapainawabganj district.

Timor rebels kill 17 Indonesian police officers

DILI, East Timor, May 31: Rebels in the troubled territory of East Timor threw grenades at a brigade truck today, killing 17 police officers, police said, reports AP.

Twelve died at the scene of the ambush outside the town of Baucau, 150 kilometers east of Dili, the capital of East Timor. Another five officers died of wounds while being transported by road to Dili, police said.

Police said the rebels fled into nearby hills. Today's deaths bring those killed in rebel attacks to 41 over the past five days.

The outbreak of violence is the worst in years in the former Portuguese colony, where a small rebel force has been fighting for independence since Indonesian troops invaded in 1975.

Two police officers were shot dead in the same area on Tuesday.

Ship catches fire at Ctg port

From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, May 31: The Honduran flag carrying vessel, Mecca-1 which brought Bangladeshi deportees here from Saudi Arabia, caught fire early this morning, Port and Fire Brigade sources said.

The fire that started from an electrical short circuit at the vessel's kitchen room at around 5:45 am continued for 35 minutes before the blaze was brought under control by Fire brigade men the port sources added.

Draft law relating to JS, privilege of MPs reviewed

The Cabinet committee — constituted to examine the draft law on the Jatiya Sangsad, its committees, and privilege and power of parliament members — held its first meeting at Sangsad Bhavan yesterday, reports UNB.

Chaired by its convener Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khasru, the meeting reviewed and examined different aspects of the draft law already submitted to the Cabinet.

The meeting observed that the proposed law should be formulated in consistent with the parliamentary form of government in various countries including the United Kingdom and India, said a press release of Parliament Secretariat.

Committee members LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zilur Rahman, Education Minister ASHK Sadeque, Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed and State Minister for Jute and Textiles AK Faezul Huq attended the meeting.

Finance Division Secretary Dr Akbar Ali Khan, Home Secretary Shafiqur Rahman and Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Secretary Amin Ullah were also present.

Paula Jones' case

From Page 1
But an admission alone will not satisfy Jones, according to Hays, who said taking the President of the United States to court has already cost a fortune.

"A settlement could not come about unless she can pay these bills," she said.

Calls and donations have been pouring into Jones' legal defense fund since the Supreme Court ruling, according to Hays.

The White House argued that a trial would distract the president from his duties and make him a target for any crank who wants the notoriety of suing the President.

Some 200,000 US dollars in the defense fund has already been spent, but Hays said she expects more donations to come as citizens are angered by Clinton's attempt to duck the suit.

"The regular person in America... thinks of him as the President of the United States, but also as a regular man," said Hays.

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Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad along with heads of diplomatic missions in Dhaka visiting the under construction Jamuna Bridge yesterday to see the progress of work. — PID photo

FM with 26 foreign diplomats visits JMB site

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad and 26 resident heads of missions in Dhaka visited the site of Jamuna Multi-Purpose Bridge (JMB) yesterday, reports UNB.

The chairman of the JMB project received the delegation and gave a short briefing on the project, said a Foreign Ministry press release.

The Foreign Minister enquired about the progress of work from engineers and other people working there.

The Dean of Diplomatic Corps thanked the Foreign Minister for inviting the heads of missions to visit the project.

Additional Foreign Secretary Aminul Islam was present.

All-party threatens hartal in Bandarban

An all-party rally here today warned of a hartal if the local administration fails to restore within two days water and power supply in the town snatched by the May 19 cyclone, reports UNB.

The rally also protested police action on a procession of town dwellers when it tried to gherao the residence of the Deputy Commissioner on Friday and demanded his removal.

Presided over by Awami League leader Shafiqur Rahman the rally was addressed, among others, by Mamay Ching of BNP, Advocate Mohiuddin of Jatiya Party and Mohammad Ilyas of Jamaat-e-Islami.

The rally was followed by a procession.

2 die after eating 'Potka fish'

From Staff Correspondent
BARISAL, May 31: Three fishermen died and two others became seriously ill after eating 'potka fish' at Ram Newaz bazar under Monpara thana of Bhola district yesterday evening.

The deceased were identified as Anwar Hossain, 22, Jahangir Hossain, 30, and Abul Hossain, 36.

6 houses gutted in Chittagong

CHITTAGONG, May 31: Six houses were gutted in a fire at a village in Hathazari thana early hours of today. Fire Service sources said, reports UNB.

The blaze, which lasted for only 20 minutes, gutted Prof Jamaluddin Chowdhury's residence and five other holdings, including one rickshaw garage and a poultry farm at 1:40 am.

Local fire fighters extinguished the fire.

Sonia

From Page 1
Congress for most of this century.

Sonia in arguable the most powerful foreign-born national on the Indian political scene, despite maintaining a sphinx-like silence. She is courted by top politicians and industrialists and is regularly visited by foreign dignitaries on state visits to India.

Pawar's aide Abdul Rahman revivie then party. Antulay had initially jumped into the fray but later made way for Pawar.

However, sources close to Sonia Gandhi — or 'madam' as she is universally called — indicated that she would neither take part in the elections nor "support any camp."

Pvt offices function

From Page 1
on a limited scale.

In Chittagong, the port functioned as usual but its offices remained closed. The commercial hub, Agrabad, was humming with activities. Similar reports from Khulna said the new weekend had a mixed reaction, with the government and autonomous body offices remaining closed. The private sector mostly worked.

The new weekend announced on Thursday without any prior notification caught everyone by surprise. The Dhaka University authorities announced two-day weekly holiday in the university after a meeting of the Syndicate.

But the students and faculty members had no inkling of the sudden holiday. Those who went for business had to return finding the gates of the faculty buildings locked.

Even the private universities and schools where classes were held during last year's non-cooperation and hartal programmes by political parties, kept their doors closed yesterday without any notification.

But the surprise announcement of two-day weekend and 40-hour week, coming after failed efforts 14 years ago by military the regime of General Ershad under rhetorics of 'austerity,' failed to make everyone happy.

Though some were more than happy to run away to their villages, ordinary people who live on a daily basis had vented their anger along with business leaders.

Coming in the wake of the tension in the Secretariat,

Tannery waste

From Page 1
WASA, WDB, DCC, Ministry of Industries and the DOE all lacked the co-ordination needed to check such pollution.

"Solidity in the Buriganga water is increasing so rapidly due to waste dumping that one day we may not even be able to navigate there," he said.

Farmers, fishermen and boatmen in the area said the tannery wastes had destroyed their livelihood. Boatman Azal Ahmed at Rayerbazar ghat pointed at the flood-plain, saying, "This time last year, fishermen were busy fishing in the area; look at the water now you can't even find a mosquito." Azal obviously did not know how much of a health hazard he himself faced by being constantly exposed to the ever-flowing stinking sludge.

WASA sources said they were trying to install a 300-foot pipeline to restore the old drainage but could not do so because the land has been occupied by a new tannery, completely obstructing the area between the embankment and a pre-existing tannery.

"This problem will be there until all agree to build a waste treatment plant. Now if we restore the old drainage system people on the other side will be happy either," the WASA official said, requesting anonymity.

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