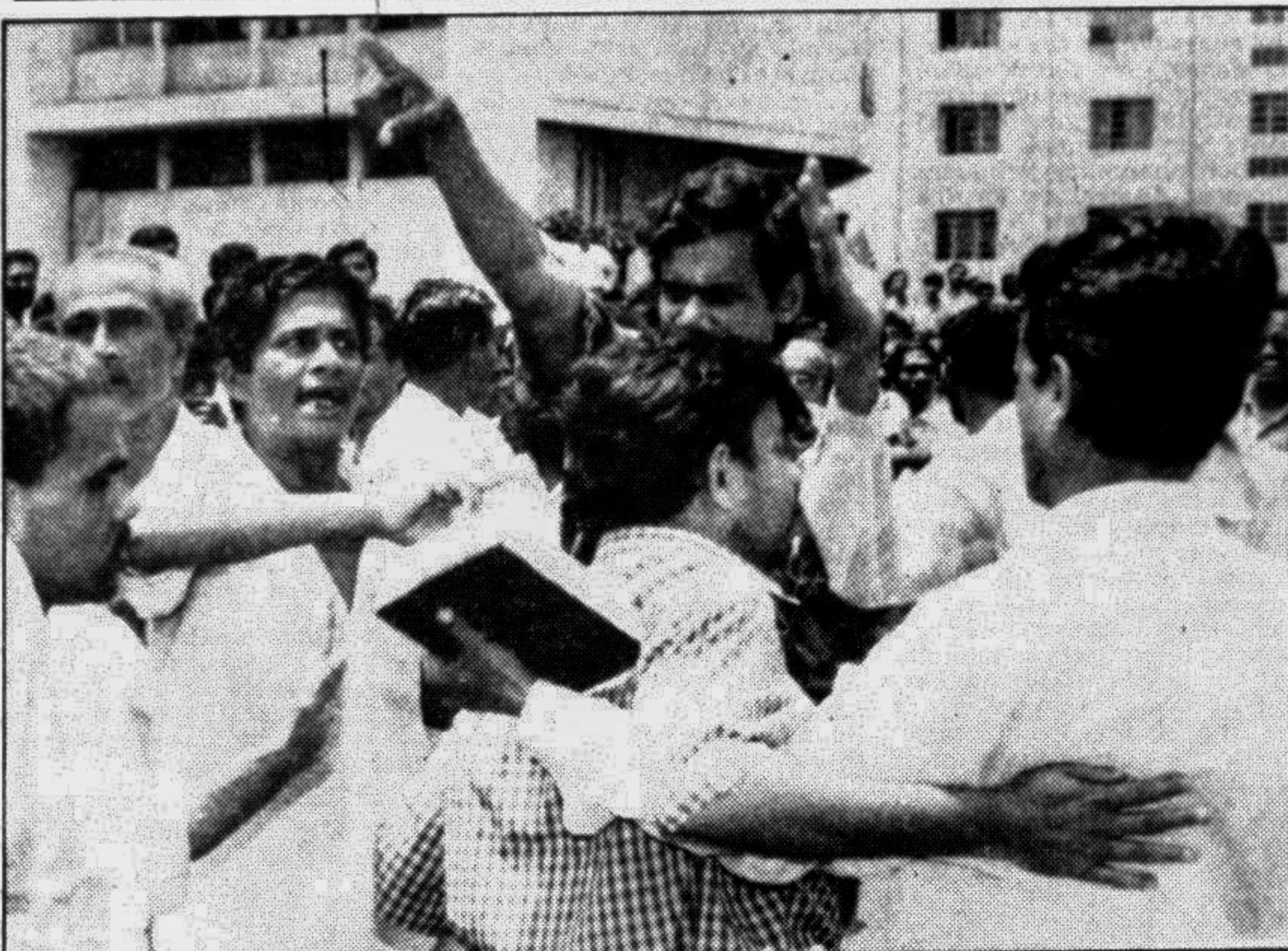


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A scuffle between rival groups of employees at the Secretariat yesterday. — Star photo

Economic diplomacy Dhaka's top priority: Samad Azad

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad yesterday said Bangladesh attaches top priority to "economic diplomacy" to attract foreign investment and secure more employment opportunities, reports BSS.

The minister was addressing the officers taking part in "on the job" specialised training at Foreign Service Academy yesterday for seven newly-inducted BCS foreign service officers.

The minister said the government will continue its efforts to brighten the country's image abroad as a peace-loving and justice-upholding democratic country.

Land development tax Govt to take action against defaulters

The government has decided to take stern action against different government, semi-government and autonomous bodies who failed to pay land development taxes, reports BSS.

The government also decided to identify and prepare a list of the defaulting organisations. Land development tax amounting to Tk 400 crore is still outstanding with different organisations in 64 districts, an official handout said yesterday.

The decisions were taken at a coordination meeting of the additional divisional commissioners held in the Ministry of Land yesterday with the Land Secretary Syed Margub Mursheed in the chair.

ADCs of Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal and Sylhet attended the meeting.

The meeting also decided to give directives to the deputy commissioners to identify khas land for establishment of play ground and graveyard in each union.

It discussed the matters relating to the construction and repair of land offices at union and thana level and jalmahal management.

ALPP meets June 10

A meeting of the Bangladesh Awami League Parliamentary Party (ALPP) will be held at 3 pm in the conference room of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban (9th floor) on June 10, reports BSS.

The meeting will be presided over by party president and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, a press release said.

Chief Whip of the Jatiya Sangsad Abdul Hasnat Abdullah has requested all parliament members of the party to attend the meeting.

Azad expressed the hope that dedicated officers of the foreign ministry will play an important role in pursuing the new policies.

The minister said Bangladesh having close ties with many international forums, including the Commonwealth, has been playing an active and constructive role in those fora.

The minister said the government is trying to secure a place of honour and distinction for Bangladesh in the community of nations.

He referred to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's participation in the micro-credit summit in Washington as co-chairperson, which boosted our image abroad.

"Bangladesh has historical ties with the Islamic world and is steadfast in the commitment to strengthen unity and cohesion in the Muslim Ummah," the minister said.

The foreign minister observed, the government is closely associated with the activities of NAM.

He said the government is paying due attention to relations with countries located in other continents too.

Azad said, we are sincere in our sustained efforts to promote meaningful cooperation in the South Asian region.

French Open Hingis, Majoli in final

PARIS, June 5: Martina Hingis, unbeaten this year and on course for her second straight Grand Slam title, rallied to beat three-time champion Monica Seles 6-7, 7-5, 6-4 Thursday to reach the French Open final, reports AP.

Hingis, the 16-year old Swiss star and the world's top-ranked woman player, began the season by winning the Australian Open. Her victory over Seles was a clear sign she is on the way back after knee surgery following a fall from a horse in April.

Seles won the French Open three straight years, before she was stabbed in Germany in 1993. It was only her 10th career loss on clay. She is now 88-10 on the surface.

Hingis and Seles were inconsistent and there were two breaks apiece early in the first set. Having broken again for a 4-3 lead, Seles played a terrible game. She had two double faults and an error as Hingis broke right back.

Meanwhile, Iva Majoli of Croatia defeated South African Amanda Coetzer 6-3, 4-6, 7-5, to reach the final, according to BBC monitored here last night.

Presidential polls in India July 14

NEW DELHI, June 5: The Election Commission of India today announced the schedule for presidential election fixing July 14 as the day of polling, reports BSS.

According to the schedule, the commission will notify calling presidential and vice-presidential elections on June 9 while the last date for filing nominations will be June 23.

The Election Commission has decided to appoint the secretary general of the Lok Sabha the returning officer.

It also decided to appoint assistant returning officers in all state capitals for making arrangements for polls.

According to the Indian constitution, the president is elected by the members of the electoral college consisting of elected members of both houses of parliament (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha) and the legislative assemblies of all states including national capital territory of Delhi and union territory of Pondichery.

However, the nominated members of either Rajya Sabha or Lok Sabha or Legislative assemblies of the states are not included in the electoral college.

Barisal JCD leader held

BARISAL, June 5: Kotwali police arrested a leader of the Jatiyatadabi Chhatra Dal (JCD) from his house here today.

According to police Mahafuzur Rahman Minar, former social welfare secretary of JCD Barisal BM University College, is wanted in several cases including murder and attacks on Jatiya Party and Awami League offices in the town.

3 CU students hurt in clash

CHITTAGONG, June 5: At least three persons were injured in a clash between two groups of students at the Chittagong University station today, campus sources said.

The injured were admitted to the university health complex.

Lawyers boycott court in Rajshahi

From Our Correspondent RAJSHAH, June 5: The lawyers of Rajshahi Bar have started boycotting the court of magistrate Ilias Bhuiyan demanding his immediate removal.

The lawyers claimed that the magistrate had manhandled Advocate Rashidur Rahman Babu.

The Deputy Commissioner, however, said he, along with the Additional District Magistrate, had investigated the matter and found that the advocate misbehaved with the magistrate for expelling his wife on charge of adopting unfair means in the HSC examination.

Thanchi incident Shantibahiniman arrested

BANDARBAN, June 5: A member of the outlawed Shantibahini was arrested on Wednesday for attacking the Thanchi BDR camp on May 3, reports UNB.

Police said Chathoal Marna, 22, also an accused of killing three policemen in Rungachhori thana in February last, was caught by the people of Angthirupara and handed over him to Tindu BDR camp.

Runa Laila enthralled audience

By Staff Correspondent Musical celebrity of the sub-continent, Runa Laila, once again enthralled a packed audience at a concert held last night in a city hotel.

Runa enthralled the audience with her popular songs in a three-hour concert held at the Ballroom of Hotel Sonargaon. The concert was a joint venture of the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel and Rotary Club of Dhaka, Buriganga.

Ghorasal urea factory resumes production

Production in Ghorasal Urea Fertiliser Factory resumed yesterday two months after it was closed for annual overhauling and discontinuity of gas supply, reports BSS.

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed and Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Lt Gen (ret'd) Nooruddin Khar visited the factory yesterday to see the resumption of gas supply.

Sarbahara men kill father, son in Khulna

KHULNA, June 5: A father and his son were killed and two persons sustained bullet injuries as miscreants attacked their houses at a village in Rupsha thana early today, reports UNB.

Police said a gang of 30-40 miscreants equipped with bombs and firearms stormed the house of Jabbar Fakir, 70, at Gayeshwargati village at about 2:30 am.

The gang took Jabbar and his youngest son Siraj Fakir, 18, on to a road, about 300 yards off their house, and shot them dead.

The assailants, who were chanting slogans in favour of the outlawed Sarbahara Party, later swooped on the nearby house of Jabbar's eldest son Nasir Fakir, 35, blasting bombs and firing gunshots.

The gang fired shots at Nasir and his wife Khadiza Begum and left the place assuming them dead, police said. They were later admitted to Sadar Hospital in critical condition.

Villagers said the miscreants fired more than 50 rounds of gunshots and blasted 20 bombs during their nearly one hour operation.

They said the attackers might be the activists of the outlawed Sarbahara Party while the victims were active supporters of the ruling Awami League.

36 activists

From Page 1 The Islami Chhatra Shibir organised the procession in support of their programmes on the Rajshahi University campus.

Meanwhile, transport workers clashed the police on allegation of harassing them and passengers. The high officials of police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

The Islami Chhatra Shibir and Jamaat-e-Islami leaders in separate statements condemned the police action and demanded unconditional release of the arrested Shibir workers. Later, in the afternoon, the ICS brought out a procession in the city protesting the police action.

US to drill

From Page 1 Occidental was entrusted with the task of gas and oil exploration in Block 12, 13 and 14 which comprises of greater Sylhet region following a production and sharing contract (PSC) signed with the Petrobangla on May 11, 1995.

Accordingly, the company began an extensive seismic survey with the help of CGG, a French company, and completed the survey on about 2000 kilometers in the 4 districts of the region till March this year. The survey gave favourable indications for drilling wells, the officials said.

DGFI men

From Page 1 Iskander, the main accused in the case, was yet to be arrested till last night.

According to police, Naik Shahidul Islam and sepoy Md Ilias of DGFI, Intelligence Branch of the armed forces, and traffic constables Abdul Guddus and Anwar Hossain were assaulted by a group of 25 people led by Sayeed Iskander near Titas Gas Building at Kawran Bazar at about 11 am on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, police searched different parts of the city including the Baridhara residence of Sayeed Iskander following the incident.

Policemen

From Page 1 tion had deployed the additional 10 plainclothes and uniformed policemen temporarily.

Only those additional forces were withdrawn, said the DMP press release, adding the Leader of the Opposition is still enjoying security more than what she deserves as per "Rules for the Protection of the Persons of the Ministers of the Government of Bangladesh" of 1979.

It said as per amended rule of 1979, a minister or equivalent is entitled to eight armed police including one havildar and one naik and two plainclothes armed policemen for security during their movement.

The rules, the press release said, are still in force and as per that the Leader of the Opposition will get the security facilities equivalent to that of a minister.

"Even then," it said, "to ensure the security of the Leader of the Opposition, 24 armed policemen under a sub-inspector are deployed at her Cantonment Residence while under a havildar, 7 other armed police are guarding her Minto Road official residence."

Besides, five plainclothes armed policemen are there full-time to ensure her security during her movement, said the release, signed by DMP Commissioner AK Al Mamun.

SEC members

From Page 1 tion before the full bench of the Appellate Division.

Accordingly, the bench comprising Chief Justice ATM Afzal, Justice Mustafa Kamal, Justice Latifur Rahman, Justice Abdur Rouf and Justice Bimalendu Bikas Roy Chowdhury heard the case and delivered the stay order for six weeks. The court granted the leave to appeal.

Attorney General Barrister KS Nabi moved the petition while Barrister Rafiqul Haque and Barrister Rokon Uddin Mahmud appeared for the respondents.

CPD seminar

From Page 1 decisions for closing down BMTF, the former industries minister said that the government could not spend the tax payers money in such a project which had been incurring losses over the years.

CPD Executive Chairman Prof Rehman Sobhan, while explaining the background of the studies, said that there were many big projects in the country and even the government lost all interest in them after their implementation as they failed to produce the desired results.

CPD has taken an initiative to look into the performance of those projects and suggest steps for future actions, he said.

Rafiq Siddique, former managing director of BMTF, said that the BMTF was set up with wrong policies for which it could not produce the desired results.

Kazi Fazlur Rahman said that most of the heavy industrial projects in the country were set up with foreign aid and they never produced good results whether the aid came from socialist countries like the Soviet Union or the capitalist countries like France and Germany.

"Actually the projects which were set up with foreign aid were not designed to be viable and there were no way to salvage those due to many loopholes at the implementation stage," he noted.

According to the study, the Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory incurred losses of more than Tk 300 crore and Chittagong Steel Mills Tk 434 crore since their inception.

US to drill

From Page 1 Occidental was entrusted with the task of gas and oil exploration in Block 12, 13 and 14 which comprises of greater Sylhet region following a production and sharing contract (PSC) signed with the Petrobangla on May 11, 1995.

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PM: Power

From Page 1 Nooruddin Khan, State Minister for Jute and Textiles AKM Faizul Haque, State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Engineer Mosharraf Hossain, MP, AHN Ashiqur Rahman, MP and Saber Hossain Chowdhury MP.

The meeting decided to allow the industrial units to sell the surplus energy generated by them to the nearby industrial units through their own distribution system.

The BOI was instructed to collect information about the package of facilities offered by other countries to their Special Economic Zones (SEZ).

The Prime Minister who is also chairperson of BOI directed the agencies concerned to extend their services in a coordinated manner to strengthen the activities of BOI.

BNP protests

From Page 1 tended protest rally in front of the party central office, the BNP secretary general further said Begum Zia needs no government protection because 12 crore people of the country are ready to protect her.

Condemning the government action, he said this had raised the question if the country was under civil or military rule.

"There is no instance of such withdrawal of security force for a politician in a democratic society," he noted.

Terming Begum Zia a symbol of national independence and sovereignty, Mannan Bhuiyan said, "This subservient government has taken a position against the independence of the country."

BNP standing committee member Moudud Ahmed said that protests would be turned into resistance unless Begum Zia's previous security arrangement was reinstated.

Abul Hasnat said providing security to a national leader also meant honouring the leader and added the then president Ziaur Rahman had honoured Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's daughter Sheikh Hasina by giving her security on her return home.

Abdullah Al Noman said the government took decision at a time when Begum Zia's son Tarek Zia was planning to join politics.

Gujral in Nepal

KATHMANDU, June 5: Visiting Indian Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral and his Nepalese counterpart Lokendra Bahadur Chand met for talks today, officials said, reports AFP.

Gujral arrived here on a three-day official visit earlier today at the invitation of Chand.

Emerging from the talks Gujral described his meeting with Chand as "highly important."

"We discussed every issue and we have agreed on every issue."

"This visit is extremely warm and cordial. We agreed on a number of issues. We also fixed a time-frame to solve any problem or issues we have agreed upon," he said.

Road accident

From Page 1 driver Jahangir Alam died at the DMCH. The bodies were sent to the DMCH morgue for autopsy.

Joydevpur police seized the passenger-bus and the microbus. However, the driver, helper and other staff of the bus fled the scene. None was arrested in connection with the accident till last night. A case was lodged with Joydevpur thana.

AL Board

From Page 1 Meanwhile, the AL yesterday announced its programmes for observing the "Historic June 7", says a press release.

Sayedee

From Page 1 hearing Sayeed's counsel BNP leader Khandakar Mahabuddin Ahmed.

A petition for stay was also placed before the court and the court after hearing SS Halder's counsel Barrister Amirul Islam issued a rule as to why the operation of the judgment of the tribunal should not be stayed.

The court granted ad-interim stay for four weeks and fixed up the date of hearing of the stay petition on July 3.

Mahabuddin told the court that since the election of one centre of Pirojpur-1 constituency has been declared void by the election tribunal there is no cause for cancelling the election of entire constituency wherein there is no complaint against the election of 90 centres.

Barrister Islam opposed the stay, saying the High Court has no power to stay the operation of the judgment of the tribunal, it can only hear the appeal.

He further said that without hearing the appeal the court can't interfere into the operation of the judgment by way of passing an order of stay.

Barrister Islam was assisted by Barrister Rafiqul Haq, Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud and SS Halder.

Mahabuddin was aided by Barrister Moudud Ahmed, Barrister Abdur Razaque and Advocate Sheikh Ansar Ali.

Jamaat calls for mass movement to protect sovereignty

Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday gave a call for a mass movement on the basis of its 17-point charter of demand to protect country's independence and sovereignty as well as Islamic values of the people, reports UNB.

The call was given at a public meeting of the party at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram mosque in the afternoon, where the Jamaat leaders blamed Awami League for establishing "a one-party, one-man rule" in the country.

It was organised to press its demand for declaring Bangladesh Islamic Republic, Quran and Sunnah as the sources of all laws as well as to protest various issues like transit, subregional grouping and government's failure in relief operation in the cyclone-affected areas.

Senior Nayebe-Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami Moulana Abbas Ali Khan, party Secretary General Matur Rahman Nizami, and member of party's Majlis-e-Shura Moulana Delwar Hossain Saidee, among others, addressed the meeting.

BNP: President

From Page 1 between the government and the opposition parties," he said reiterating his view.

The BNP leaders also apprised the President of their party decision to take part in the forthcoming Manikganj byelection with a view to respecting the advice of the President and keeping the democratic process working.

Members of the delegation include Deputy Leader of the Opposition Prof AQM Badrud-doza Chowdhury, BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Khandaker Delwar Hossain, KM Obaidur Rahman, MK Anwar, Col (ret'd) Oli Ahmed, Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, M Saifur Rahman, Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan, M Moshed Khan, Abdullah Al Noman, Moudud Ahmed and Khandaker Mahub Hossain.

Sectt employees

From Page 1 slogans for about an hour, not targeting the government, but accusing each other of making attempts to crush the movement.

Leaders of the each group gave speeches, renewing the demands of the employees, and called upon the employees to continue the two-hour token strike till their demands were met.

Some activists of the newly emerged third group strongly demanded unity among the rivals.

They warned that leaders of the two rival groups would be thrown out of the leadership if they did not come to a common platform in the interest of the employees.

The agitating employees, however, returned to their respective offices at about 12 noon.

Transport strike in Khulna

KHULNA, June 5: Buses, minibuses and trucks went off the road here today due to a strike called by Transport owners to protest an alleged attack on a bus driver, reports UNB.

Khulna Paribahan Malik Samity Oikya Parishad called an indefinite transport strike on 18 routes of Khulna region.

JP rebels

From Page 1 Moazzem Hossain had earlier sharply criticised Ershad for degrading JP's image in public as they said, he had 'relations' with a party woman MP.

Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury who led the party when Ershad was in jail had sided with the rebels.

But Mizan Chowdhury deserted the two rebels recently following a visit to his residence by Ershad.

Zafar said he is backed by 18 central leaders of the JP including 9 vice-chairmen. The council has been called by Shamim Al-Mamun, and assistant secretary general of the party.

AL June 7 programmes

Bangladesh Awami League will observe the June 7, commemorating the historic Six Point Movement, a party press release said here yesterday, reports BSS.

In observance of the day, national and party flags will be hoisted atop the Bangabandhu Bhaban central office of the party and all the units of the party.

Prime Minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina will place wreaths at the portrait of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Bangabandhu Bhaban.

A rally will be held in the afternoon at Tejgaon Industrial Area, where Shaheed Manu breathed his last.

Awami League General Secretary Zillur Rahman has called upon the party's divisional, district and thana level units to observe the day in a befitting manner through holding rallies and discussions.

AL Board

From Page 1 Meanwhile, the AL yesterday announced its programmes for observing the "Historic June 7", says a press release.

The programmes on the day include, hoisting of national and party flags at Bangabandhu Bhaban and all offices of the party at 6 am, placing of wreath by Prime Minister and AL chief Sheikh Hasina at the portrait of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Bangabandhu Bhaban at 7 am, and workers rally at Tejgaon at 3:30 pm.



The Nature Conservation Committee brought out a colourful procession in the city yesterday on the occasion of the World Environment Day. — Star photo

PM: Environment Day

From Page 1 solve environmental disorders. Public awareness is very important...," Hasina said calling upon people of all walks of life and the NGOs to join in the 'great task of preserving the environment'.

Recalling the contribution of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in this field, she said Bangabandhu had undertaken so many programmes for development of environment as part of his arduous struggle for rebuilding the war-ravaged country.

Elaborating, she said, the pioneer of tree-plantation programme in the country Bangabandhu had transformed the then 'race course' into Suhrawardy Uddyan in the heart of the city with a huge plantation of flower and fruit bearing plants, planted a variety of trees in the fallow lands of educational institutions, transformed the sea-shore and offshore islands into green belts and established the Bhawal National Uddyan.

In this regard, the PM regretted that trees along the city streets were cut in large number during '77-80.

Referring to the danger of environmental degradation, Hasina blamed the rich nations for creating an awesome situation in this planet. "Rich nations are dumping harmful wastes into oceans and rivers, releasing carbon dioxide and chloro-fluro-carbons in the atmosphere threatening life on the earth."

The Prime Minister noted, "Temperature in the sea is increasing due to global warming

what may cause apprehension of inundation of the lower region of Bangladesh and the whole of the Maldives under the sea.

The PM cited natural calamities in the country as the outcome of global problems like Greenhouse effect, increased temperature on the earth and depletion of the ozone layer and said desertification and degradation of soil, water and air pose a great threat to the country.

To overcome these, she said infrastructural facilities for the large segment of the people has to be improved first and added, continuous endeavours inside the country and international cooperation are needed.

Inmate of Pabna Mental Hospital commits suicide

PABNA, June 5: An inmate of Pabna Mental Hospital here allegedly committed suicide early today, reports UNB.