

79 die in Thai
hotel fire

BANGKOK, July 11: The death toll from a fire that engulfed a hotel in the Thai Holiday resort of Pattaya today rose to 79, police said, reports AFP. Most of the dead were Thais, but one Hungarian man perished in the blaze, as well as a middle east man, they said.

The deaths were attributed mainly to smoke inhalation.

The Thais were either hotel staff or employees of the electricity generating authority of Thailand (EGAT) who were attending a seminar when the fire broke out, media reported.

The blaze started on the ground floor of the 30-storey royal Jomtien resort on the east coast and within one hour had swept up the stairwells to the top of the building, police said.

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**PM leaves for
Germany
tonight**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will deliver the key-note address at an international conference on adult education that begins in Hamburg today, renewing the country's commitment to fight illiteracy, reports UNB.

She leaves tonight for the German city to attend the five-day conference. It will be inaugurated by German President Roman Herzog.

The UNESCO sponsored conference will adopt Hamburg Declaration, providing a sense of direction on expansion of scope of adult education and mass literacy in the global context.

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**Bangladesh
self-sufficient
in rice output
says Holzman**

WASHINGTON, July 11: US Ambassador designate to Bangladesh John C Holzman has said, Bangladesh has achieved self-sufficiency in certain areas and the country is virtually self-sufficient in the production of rice, reports BSS.

Speaking to the senate committee on foreign relations yesterday before its confirmation by the senate as the president's nominee to be US ambassador to Bangladesh, Holzman said the country has significantly reduced population growth in cooperation with US

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**Nepali chopper
makes emergency
landing in Sitakunda**

CHITTAGONG, July 11: A helicopter of Mana Kamana Airways Private Ltd of Nepal made an emergency landing in Sitakunda thana today failing to land at Chittagong Airport due to inclement weather, reports UNB.

Police said the helicopter landed at Sultana Jute Mills ground safely at about 6:30 pm. Two captains and one engineer were aboard the helicopter.

BSS adds: Pilot Durjoy Bahadur Pan was quoted by police as saying that they started their journey from Calcutta at around 3 pm today for Yangon via Chittagong. But they had to make emergency landing due to rough weather. Police are guarding the helicopter.

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Landslides kill 30 in Ctg, CHT & Cox's Bazar

By Staff Correspondent

At least 30 people including twelve children were killed and 10 injured in landslides in Chittagong Rangamati, Cox's Bazar, Bandarban and Kaptai in the early hours of yesterday due to torrential rains, according to reports from Our Staff Correspondent in Chittagong and BS.

Fire Service and police sources said 13 people, mostly children and women, of three families, were killed when chunks of earth from a nearby hill fell on their houses at Reserve Bazar on the bank of Rangamati Lake.

The victims were asleep when the landslide occurred. Fire service and police recovered 13 bodies trapped under

earth after a five-hour search.

The dead were identified as Farida Begum, 26, Shamima Akhter, 2, Nur-Nahar, 35, Nur Akhter, 2, Farida, 3, Mamun, 5, Sanwara, 30, Kamala Begum, 50, Manwara Akhter, 13, Jangir Alam, 20, Yunus Mia, 35, Maktob Hossain, 65, and Zeni, 6. The bodies were sent to hospital for post mortem.

Three of the injured persons Anwar Hossain, Rehana Begum and Jainul Abedin were admitted to Rangamati Sadar Hospital.

The victims were asleep when the landslide occurred. Fire service and police recovered 13 bodies trapped under

fire service and police sources said, Aleya Begum, 14, and Kulsum, 12, were killed when a big chunk of land from the adjacent hill fell on their house at Station Road.

The victims were daughters of one Nurul Islam.

The second landslide occurred at Dulal Colony near Station Road in which three persons were killed. The victims were identified as Runa Khatoon, 16, Amina Khatoon, 60, and Mohammad Momin, 11.

In another landslide two labourers of Amin Jute and Textile Mills were killed when the wall of their house collapsed under the weight of a big chunk of earth last night.

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BNP supports July 15 hartal

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) yesterday extended its support to the dawn to dusk nationwide hartal on July 15 called by Islam Okya Jote and Jamaat-e-Islami to protest the Zionist act of Blasphemy against the Holy Quran and Prophet Hazrat Mohammad (SM).

The decision was taken at a meeting of the BNP Standing Committee last night. BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Begum Khaleda Zia chaired the meeting held at her Minto Road office last night.

A party press release said, the meeting in a resolution protested and condemned the act of blasphemy.

The resolution said, people

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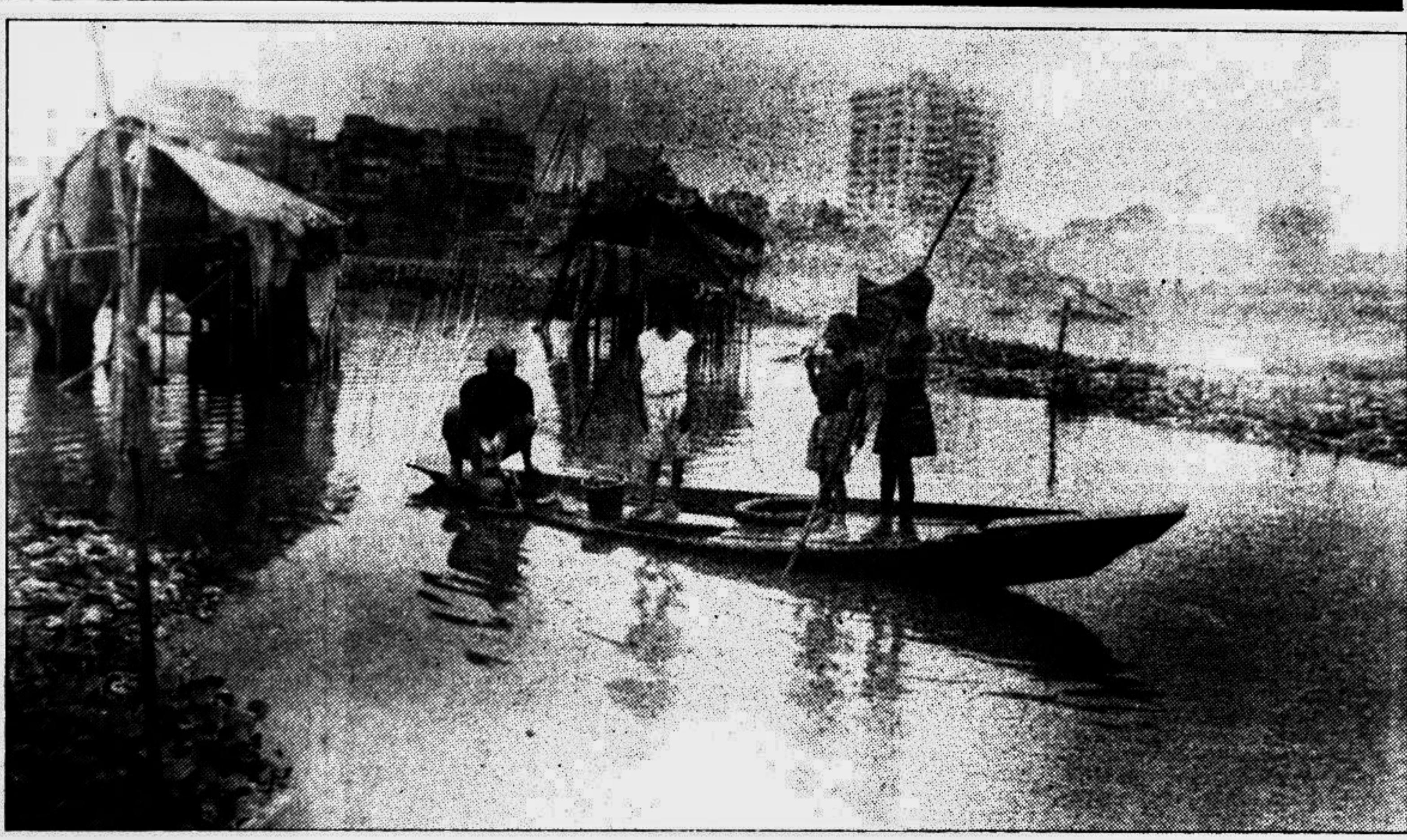
Tremors shake Ctg, Cox's Bazar

CHITTAGONG, July 11: Tremors were felt in Chittagong and Cox's Bazar today, but no casualties or damage was reported, says UNB.

The tremor in Chittagong was felt from 8:51 pm for about 25 seconds. However, Met Office could not confirm the quake immediately.

Earlier at about 9 in the morning, a moderate earthquake shook the Cox's Bazar town which lasted for about 30 seconds.

In the low-lying areas, kutchi houses and ground floor



Rain waters have submerged low lying areas of the city.

—Star photo

Flood grips six more districts

Road communication with 16 N-districts snapped

By Staff Correspondent

Flood gripped at least six more districts yesterday while direct road communication between the capital and 16 northern districts remained snapped as over 100 feet stretch of Nagarbari-Natakhal highway at Raghunathpur in Bera thana of Pabna was washed away Thursday night.

However, ferry services between Aricha and Nagarbari resumed yesterday morning after nearly 12 hours of suspension, official sources said.

Flood situation ten districts worsened while low-lying areas in Pabna, Sirajganj, Sherpur, Kushtia, Bogra and Lalmonirhat went under water due to incessant rain.

Five people were drowned in flood waters in Cox's Bazar and 30 others killed in landslides in Chittagong and three hill districts.

Dhaka city and most parts of the country experienced significant rain for the fourth day yesterday.

Most parts of the Khulna city were submerged due to downpour overnight, according a report received here.

In the low-lying areas, kutchi houses and ground floor

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Murder at DU: BCL expels 2 activists

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) has expelled two of its activists for their alleged involvement in the killing of Imam Hossain Tonai, a city unit leader of BCL, a press release said yesterday.

The two are Farid Ahmed Sentu alias Sada Sentu, a central committee member and Shahin Khan, Vice-President of the Dhaka city unit of BCL.

The decision was taken at an emergency meeting of the executive committee of the BCL, the press release said.

The press release was signed by AKM Enamul Haq Shamim and Ishaque Ali Khan Panna, president and the general secretary respectively of the BCL.

Imam Hossain Tonai, assistant library secretary of the BCL city unit (north) was stabbed to death early morning Wednesday on the Dhaka University campus. His body was found on the road near the east gate of Curzon Hall.

None was arrested in this connection till yesterday, police

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Garments workers to observe strike July 30

By Staff Correspondent

The Bangladesh Garments Workers and Employees Federation has called for a 24-hour strike in all units of the country on July 30 to press home 8-point demand of Sramik Karimul Okya Parishad (SKOP) and 5-point demand of garment workers.

The Federation also urged the garments workers and employees to gherao BGMEA office in Dhaka on July 24.

The strike call was given at a rally of the Federation held at Gulshan Circle 2 kutchi bazar yesterday afternoon, said a press release.

With the Federation president Abdul Hussain in the chair, the rally was addressed, by Renu Begum, Alyub Khan, Faizul Karim, Maher Ali, Nahid Rahaman, Delwar Hussain, Anwar Hussain, Nahar Akhter, Kaliyam Hussain, Hasina Begum and Arshad Ali.

Magurjhara gas well fire

Probe body to submit report tomorrow

By Sharier Khan

The five-member committee set up to investigate the Magurjhara gas well explosion incident has finalised its report and will submit it to the Energy Minister tomorrow, according to sources.

Committee members and government officials remained tight-lipped about the findings, saying that early disclosure of these would create confusion.

Energy Minister Lt Gen (retd) Nooruddin Khan, when asked about this, told The Daily Star, 'Whichever organisation is found responsible for the explosion will have to pay for the damages caused by the explosion.' If Occidental (the US company doing the exploration) is found responsible, it will have to compensate for the damages. If not, we'll have to compensate for the damages jointly (the government and the Occidental).'

Following the explosion, allegations were made by various quarters against US company Occidental that the disaster occurred because of its negligence or inefficiency.

Experts had earlier said that the explosion took place due to uncontrollable high pressure inside the well. Occidental was drilling at a depth of 839 metres when the accident took place.

Occidental's officials had so far refrained from making any comment about the cause of the explosion but indicated that it

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had occurred due to a technical fault.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Chhatra Shibir, the student wing of the ruling party, continued strike for the 12th day today on the campus demanding removal of the Vice-Chancellor for his reported move to introduce the faculty of Islam and comparative religion in the varsity.

Meanwhile, Chhatra Shibir also demanded removal and trial of the Vice-Chancellor for his alleged involvement in corruption and nepotism. But the Shibir demanded introduction of the faculty of Islam and comparative religion in the varsity.

6 shot dead in Karachi

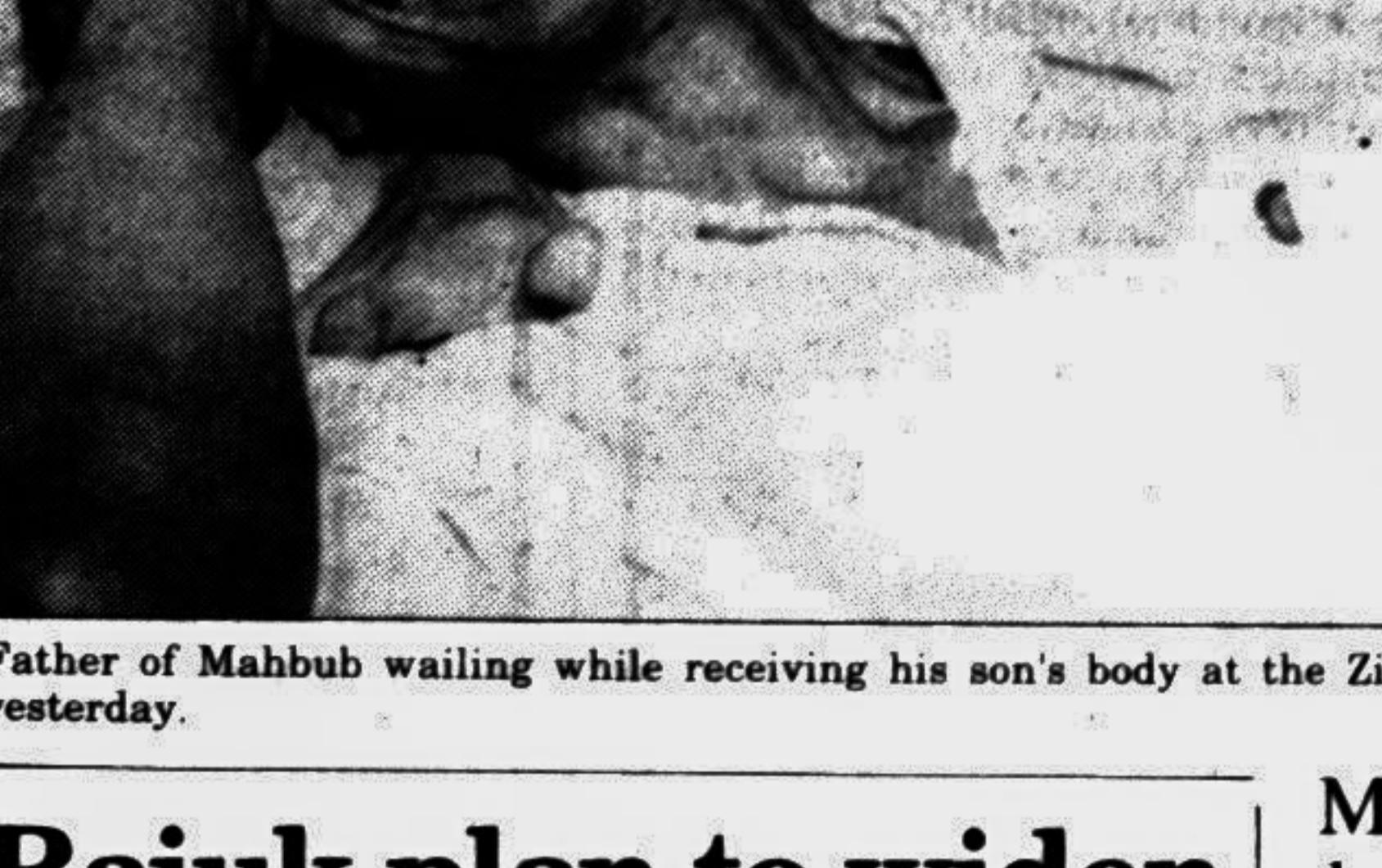
KARACHI, July 11: Six people, including three policemen, were shot dead today in Karachi's eastern district, police said, reports AFP.

Sub-inspector Kashifur Rehman, his younger brother, a bodyguard and a police driver, were ambushed soon after they came out of a mosque after saying their Friday noon prayers in Malir district, police said.

Rehman was the son of a senior official of the Karachi police, Azizur Rehman. Police described the incident as a targeted killing.

Police recovered the body of an unidentified man from the car abandoned by the attackers

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—Star photo

Rajuk plan to widen lanes, by-lanes

By Naimul Haq

crore taka, the sources said.

The intricate connecting alleys will greatly benefit from this plan," said a Rajuk official. Most of those will be straightened and will have fine edges with concrete sides to allow movement of pedestrians whenever needed.

"Rajuk will first take up a number of lanes and by-lanes as a 'model'. The rest of the work will be done according to the model," the official said.

The project will take about 40 years to be completed.

The main problem that the project may face is acquisition of land. There are few places where spaces are available by the side of the lanes and by-lanes that belong to the government," said the Rajuk official. "In most cases, private property have to be purchased through negotiations."

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Mahbub's body handed over to his father

By Staff Correspondent

The body of Mahbub, who was found dead in the wheel carriage of a Biman airbus at Riyadh airport in May, was handed over to his father at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) yesterday.

Saudi authorities sent Mahbub's body, death certificate and other reports to Dhaka by a Biman flight which landed at the ZIA earlier in the day, according to a Biman official.

Quoting the death certificate, the official said Mahbub was fatally injured due to pressure in his chest and head. However, most of the other reports sent from Saudi Arabia were in Arabic and the details would not be known immediately.

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism, Dr Md. Huqiddin Khan Alamgir, gave a cheque for Tk one lakh to Mahbub's father Moazzem Hosain during the handing over of the coffin at the VIP lounge of