

Illegal manpower export to Malaysia: 3 big agencies involved

A top-level enquiry team found three big recruiting agencies of the country responsible for illegal manpower export to Malaysia, official sources said yesterday, reports UNB.

Besides, about 40 to 45 fake agencies are involved in such illegal acts, forcing the innocent people into miserable life in Malaysia.

Some Bangladeshis working in Malaysia, including a section of Bangladesh embassy staff, and some officials at the BOESL are also involved in the illegal manpower export.

See Page 12 Col 8

Medicine, gold worth Tk 70 lakh seized at ZIA

Customs surveillance team seized contraband medicine and gold bars worth about Tk 70 lakh at Zia International Airport yesterday, reports UNB.

Officials said the team opened four suitcases as their two owners who were scheduled to board a connecting flight for Sylhet did not turn up.

The suitcases bearing names of two home-bound passengers — Fazlur Rahman and Moulvi DMR of Sylhet — reached here from Dubai by a Biman flight at 11 in the morning.

But the passengers did not board the Sylhet-bound connecting flight that left at 6 pm.

Huge contraband medicine worth about Tk 60 lakh, four gold bars each weighing 10 tolas and gold ornaments of 101 grams were found in the suitcases.

AL to send relief teams to flood affected areas

Awami League working committee at an emergency meeting yesterday reviewed the country's flood situation and decided to send central relief teams to the affected areas, reports UNB.

Hold at the party's central office with its acting president Amir Hossain Amu in the chair, the meeting called upon the party leaders and workers to stand beside the country's flood affected people.

The meeting was informed that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been maintaining regular contact with the party leaders and she is being briefed on the overall situation of the country, including the latest flood situation, said a press release.

Among others, party central leaders Abdul Samad Azad, Abdul Mannan, Abdul Momen, Zillur Rahman, Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Abdur Razzak, Begum Matia Chowdhury and Prof Abu Sayeed were present.

2 drown as launch capsizes in Barisal

PATUAKHALI, July 15: A young woman and a minor girl drowned when an overloaded small passenger launch sank in Andharkhanik river at Kalapara today, reports UNB.

Quoting the survivors police said the launch, ML Hasan, with about 50 passengers overturned as it left Kalapara Food Godown ghat at about 2:30 pm. It was heading towards Babola Bazar.

All but two — Lovely, 3, of Lalua village and Morshed, 25, of Chandupura village — swam ashore. The bodies were recovered by the locals.

Inside Today

Article

Rains and floods
Column : Window on Asia
by Shahid Latif
Page 4

Focus

Environment: Topsoil loss and land degradation: How to arrest the process?

Page 5

Business

Dhaka, Tehran sign accord on investment protection

US submits new proposal to WTO to open financial market
Pages 6,7

International

Hun Sen renews propaganda blitz, 25 killed in custody

Page 8

Aricha-Nagarbari ferry service resumes

Diarrhoea in Bandarban: Flood situation in N-districts worsens

The flood situation continued to deteriorate in the north-western region and greater Faridpur district yesterday while it was steadily improving in greater Sylhet and Chittagong and the hill tracts regions, reports UNB.

Diarrhoea and dysentery broke out in Bandarban hill district where flood situation further improved during the day. Some 200 people already fell victims of the water-borne diseases, official sources said.

Civil Surgeon of Bandarban said 11 medical teams have been working to check the

spread of diarrhoea in Sadar thana and the municipal area, but they cannot go to other thanas due to communication disruption.

The authorities resumed ferry services between Aricha and old Nagarbari ghat on Monday night due to partial disruption in ferry movement on the Aricha-Natakholi route.

Officials said only light vehicles were now being ferried between Aricha and Natakholi ghat, which connects the road link between Dhaka and 16 northern districts.

Sixty-nine people died fol-

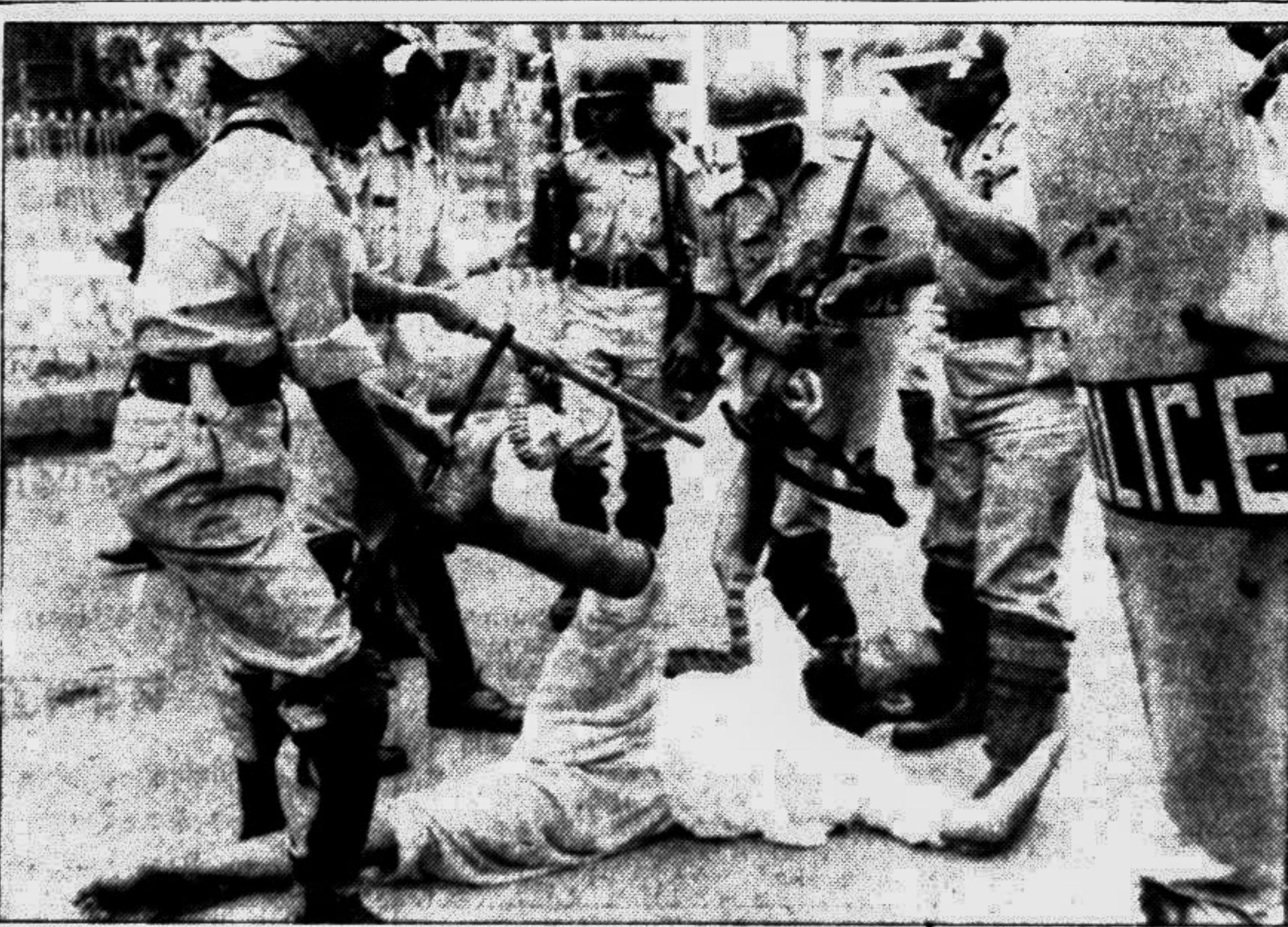
lowing flash flood in 96 thanas of the country's 21 districts which affected nearly 30 lakh people, an official handout said yesterday.

The handout said some 30 lakh people belonging to four lakh families were affected in the flash flood.

Another handout said supply and distribution of relief materials in 21 flood affected districts could not be carried out due to harta.

It said the vehicles carrying relief goods could not move from district and thana head-

See Page 12 Col 8



JLO activists clashed with police at Purana Paltan in the city during harta hours yesterday.

Star photo

70 injured in sporadic clashes during harta

By Staff Correspondent

A dawn-to-dusk countrywide harta, called by some pro-Islamic political parties yesterday, passed off by and large peacefully barring some rare incidents of clashes that left over 70 people injured.

Pickets clashed with police and anti-harta activists leaving at least 30 injured in the city, 20 in Narayanganj, 30 in Savar, and three in Raiganj in Chattogram.

Police picked up 247 pickets from the city's Mirpur, Farmgate, Gulistan, Paltan and Motijheel areas during clashes. Of them, 174 were later released, said a police press release. Of the injured, Alamgir, 18, a garment worker was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospi-

See Page 12 Col 7

BNP demands release of its activists held during harta

By DMCH Correspondent
An unidentified gang killed a young man in Sutrapur area in the old part of the city early yesterday morning.

The victim, identified as Nitu Shil, 26, son of one Roman Mohon Shil, was found dead on the roof top of a two-storey building. There were marks of bullet and deep stab injuries over the body.

Police said, three young men called Nitu out of his house at North Motijheel near Bonorami Lane, at about 3:30 am.

The motive behind the killing could not be known immediately. Nitu's elder brother, Niranjan Chandra Shil, filed a murder case with Sutrapur thana.

However, none was arrested till last night.

BCP activist shot dead

From Our Correspondent

JENIDAH, July 15: An activist of Biplobi Communist Party (Haq Group) was shot dead by unidentified gunmen at Joradah bazar in Haringanduha thana yesterday evening.

Police said, the armed men attacked Dulal, 30, when he was gossiping at the market.

The reason behind the killing could not be known. A case was filed.

Italian Deputy FM in city

Italian Deputy Foreign Minister Senator Patrizia Tola arrived in the city yesterday on a three-day official visit, reports UNB.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury received her at Zia International Airport.

This is the first high-level visit from Italy to Bangladesh in nine years. The visit is significant at a time when Bangladesh and Italy have completed 25 years of diplomatic relations.

Tola will hold formal talks with Abul Hasan Chowdhury today, covering the entire

See Page 12 Col 7

2 alleged child lifters held in city

By DMCH Correspondent

Police held two women for their alleged involvement in lifting a new born baby from Kawran Bazar area under Tejgaon thana in the city yesterday afternoon.

According to police, the two women, identified as Ambia, 35, and Noorjahan, 50, came from Barisal but further details about them could not be known.

See Page 12 Col 8

JRC meet begins in city July 19 Focus on sharing waters of Teesta, 5 other rivers likely

By M Anwarul Haq

A two-day meeting of the Bangladesh-India Joint Rivers Commission (JRC), the first in seven years, begins in Dhaka on July 19 to take up the issue of permanent sharing of the Teesta waters and review the problems encountered in implementing the Ganges water sharing accord, sources said yesterday.

Indian Minister for Water Resources Sis Ram Ola is due to arrive in the city on July 18 at the head of a 11-member team comprising water experts and senior officials to participate in the meeting.

Earlier, a three-day meeting of the JRC was scheduled to begin in Dhaka from April 10. But it was subsequently cancelled

due to the political change in Delhi at that time.

The upcoming JRC meeting is expected to give special attention to the recommendations of the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Committee (JC), set up under the provision of the Ganges accord. The Joint Committee gave a detailed annual report on the problems encountered in implementing the Ganges water accord during the first year, ending with the dry season in May.

Among other recommendations, the JC suggested carrying out a scientific study for finding the reasons for short-

See Page 12 Col 3

due to the political change in Delhi at that time.

The upcoming JRC meeting is expected to give special attention to the recommendations of the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Committee (JC), set up under the provision of the Ganges accord. The Joint Committee gave a detailed annual report on the problems encountered in implementing the Ganges water accord during the first year, ending with the dry season in May.

Among other recommendations, the JC suggested carrying out a scientific study for finding the reasons for short-

See Page 12 Col 3

Toxic pesticides being imported due to 'faulty' ban order

By Shehab Ahmed and Inam Ahmed

Confusion over group name and brand name of certain pesticides is being exploited by some companies to import the items, banned because of their toxic effect on fish.

The Commerce Ministry had issued an order on March 25, 1996 banning import of Synthetic Pyrethroid (SP). But its gazette notification wrongly identified SP as a brand name instead of a group name of pesticides.

The notification placed a ban on all HS Codes under HEP-

taclor-40 WP, DDT, Diclofop generic name, Bydrine brand, Methyl Bromide, Synthetic Pyrethroid, Chlordane 40 WP and Dieldrin pesticides.

But since the pesticides falling in the SP group are registered under their different brand names, some of the companies have continued importing the pesticide under its brand names evading customs check.

According to the monthly report of Pesticide Association of Bangladesh (PAB), the apex body of companies dealing with pesticides, some companies have continued to sell pesticides of SP group since the ban was imposed. It is alleged that

See Page 12 Col 1

PM leaves Germany for Miami

FRANKFURT, July 15: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina left here today for Miami, USA, ending her three-day visit to Germany, reports BSS.

Earlier, the Prime Minister arrived here this morning from Hamburg where she attended the inaugural session of the UNESCO-sponsored international conference on adult education.

During her stay in Hamburg, the Prime Minister, besides presenting her key-note speech at the conference, attended a number of programmes.

Sheikh Hasina held discussions with German President Roman Herzog at the Congress Centre. She was given a reception by the first mayor of Hamburg.

The Bangladeshi nationals living in Germany also accorded a grand reception to the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister is expected to return home in the first week of August.

See Page 12 Col 8

AKRAM KHAN

Victory shouldn't be taken for granted: Raja

Bangladesh take on Pakistan in Asia Cup today

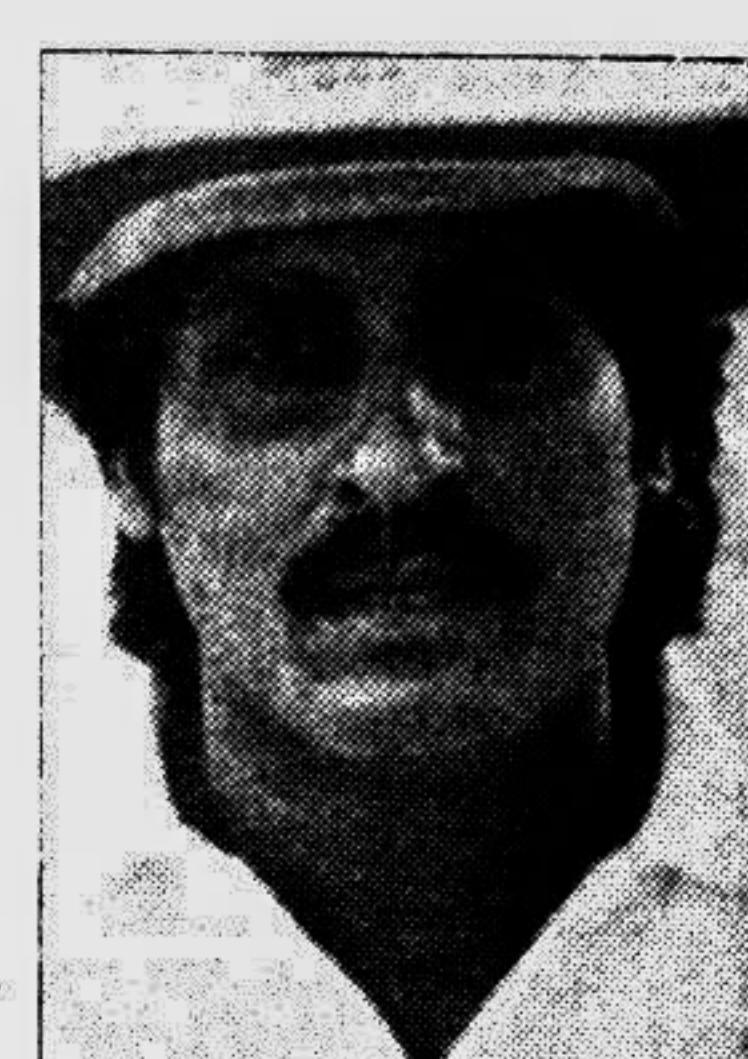
COLOMBO, July 15: Pakistan captain Ramiz Raja warned his players not to take victory for granted when they clash with Bangladesh in the Asia Cup tomorrow, reports AFP.

Bangladesh is the only non-Test playing nation in the limited-overs tournament also fea-

turing world champions Sri Lanka and India.

Raja remains wary of a side that was granted official one-day status last month and

See Page 12 Col 7



RAMEEZ RAJA

BNP demands retrial of Shima rape & murder case

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has blamed the government for making the trial of Shima rape and murder case a 'farce' and demanded fresh enquiry and retrial of the case, reports UNB.

In a statement yesterday, he said Shima Chowdhury was violated and died mysteriously in police custody. Moreover, she was cremated after her death although she was a Muslim convert.

The country has now become a lawless country. The government was using the police to file thousands of false cases and made indiscriminate arrests across the country," Bhuiyan alleged.

He said the government was mainly responsible for creating a situation that turned the trial of Shima Chowdhury case into a farce.

Because of such injustices and oppressions, he added.

See Page 12 Col 8

Magurjhara fire: Time for probe report extended

By Staff Correspondent

The time for submission of probe report on the Magurjhara gas well fire incident has been extended till July 23.

Sources said yesterday that due to technical aspect of the investigation, the probe committee, headed by an additional secretary of the Energy Ministry, requested extension of the time.

Gas, oil exploration in 15 blocks 21 cos submit proposals to take part in bidding

Star Report