

Intensity of gas well fire unchanged

From Staff Correspondent
SYLHET, July 22: The intensity of the fire at the Magurhara drilling site remained unchanged today, according to official sources.

Leakage of gas through a large number of points around the gasfield area continued for the third day. An official of Occidental said this afternoon that the pressure of gas is extremely high within 500 metres of the base of the rig.

Nigel Hopkins, President and General Manager of Occidental, Bangladesh, along with two other officials visited the gasfield area today. They attended a meeting with the dis-

Aug 15 killing

5 detained accused given division in jail

Five detained accused facing trial in the Bangabandhu murder case were given Division One in Dhaka Central Jail yesterday, officials said, reports UNB.

They have been given all facilities of Division-1 after the approval from district magistrate in this regard reached the jail authorities Monday night.

The accused are Col (ret) Syed Farooq Rahman, Col (ret) Sultan Shahria Rashid Khan, Col (LPR) Muiyuddin, Hon Capt (ret) Abdul Wahab Joardar and former State Minister for Information Taheruddin Thakur.

One executed in Barisal jail for killing daughter

A man was hanged to death in Barisal central jail early yesterday for killing his daughter in 1988, reports UNB.

Abdul Khaleque Mir was executed at the gallows of the jail at 1.30 am, almost seven years after he was awarded death sentence by a district court, according to an official handout in the city.

The President rejected his prayer for clemency after Additional Sessions Judge of Barisal Mohammed Abdus Sattar Bhuiyan pronounced the judgement on 21 November, 1990.

Khaleque, according to the prosecution, killed his daughter Nasima, an issue of his first wife, on May 26 in 1988 and set ablaze their house at a village in Banaripara thana.

On the following day, he

Depression may weaken

The monsoon depression over the northwest Bay moved northwesterly direction and crossed West Bengal coast of India near Sagar Island at 6 am yesterday and turned into a land depression over Gangetic West Bengal and adjoining area, reports UNB.

A Met Office special bulletin said it is likely to move in a northwesterly direction and may weaken gradually.

Monsoon is strong over north Bay.

Maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Mongla have been advised to keep hoisted local cautionary signal number three.

All fishing boats and trawlers over north Bay have been advised to remain anchored till this morning.

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Review Committee meets

10pc pay rise from this month likely

Star Report

The seven-member committee to review the National Pay Commission recommendations for about 750,000 government employees and officials held a meeting on Sunday to discuss various issues relating to its implementation in phases.

The committee is likely to recommend phase-wise implementation of the pay Commission report on new scale of salaries and benefits, with a 10 per cent rise from July this year, followed by 5 to 7 pc in January next year, highly placed sources said.

It is scheduled to submit its report by September.

There will be another 15 or 25 per cent hike, subject to availability of funds in the next fiscal, they said.

But the Class Four employees will get their full pay, on the basis of the final report by the review committee.

However, officials remained tightlipped on the proposals. Establishment Secretary Mahe

Alam who attended the meeting told The Daily Star last night that he was not aware of any such proposal. "Do not pay attention to rumours," he remarked.

The government allocated Tk 700 crore in the current financial year to meet the expenses due to pay hike.

Boat capsizes in Jamuna: 13 die

BOGRA, July 22: At least 13 people were killed in a boat capsized in the river Jamuna in Sariakandi thana of the district today, reports UNB.

Police said the Sariakandi-bound engine boat carrying about 100 passengers from Kamalpur village of the thana sank in the river at about 4 pm.

Thirteen bodies were recovered till 6 pm, but their identities could not be known immediately, according to preliminary reports.

The committee was formed on June 23 by the government with the Cabinet Secretary as its convener. Other members of the committee are Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Defence Secretary, Secretary to the President, a Member of Planning Commission, Secretary, Finance Division and Establishment Secretary.

The committee has been given the responsibility to examine all aspects of the Pay Commission report, how to implement it without straining the government resources, its inflationary effect, how much could be implemented in phases, etc.

The cabinet has also decided that the new pay scales would be effective from July this year on the basis of the recommendations of the review committee.

The fifth national Pay Commission was constituted in September last year. It submitted its report on June 18. It suggested

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AL call to resist 'unholy forces' 'Join Friday's prayer to free National Mosque'

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League leaders at a protest rally in the city yesterday vowed to resist the 'unholy forces' who were trying to 'create chaos' in the country. They also criticised the role played by the Khatib of the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque, Moulana Obaidul Haq, during an incident at the Eid-e-Miladunabi function at the mosque.

The Dhaka City unit of the ruling Awami League organised the rally at Bangabandhu Avenue yesterday afternoon to protest, what they called, the unruly activities of some fundamentalist groups during the

Miladunabi function.

Some people threw shoes on the dais during the July 17 function at Baitul Mukarram mosque where President Shahabuddin Ahmed was present.

Denouncing the recent activities of the anti-Liberation fundamentalist forces in the guise of Islam, the AL leaders urged all true Muslims and pro-Liberation forces to join Jumma prayer at the National Mosque on Friday next to protest the incident.

"Join next Friday's prayer at

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IF showcase on Khatib likely today

By Staff Correspondent

A meeting of the Governing Body of Islamic Foundation yesterday decided to serve a showcase notice today on Moulana Obaidul Haq, Khatib of Baitul Mukarram mosque.

State Minister for Religious Affairs Moulana Nurul Islam, who presided over the meeting, told this correspondent last night that the Khatib would be asked to reply with 7 days why he would not be relieved of his responsibilities.

The meeting also formed a three-member probe committee to investigate the untoward incident on July 17 at the mosque. The committee headed by Joint Secretary of Religious Affairs

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BCL, JCD clash at Eden College: 8 injured

At least eight students of Eden University College were injured yesterday in a clash between the activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, reports UNB.

Among the injured, Helen Jerin Khan, JCD's Eden College unit joint convener and Beauty Akter of BCL were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The other injured are Ferdousi, Nazma and Sathi of JCD.

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A student injured during the clash, being rescued by police (top) and a view of the ransacked office room of Eden Girls' University College (bottom). -Star photo

Bangladeshi women hold 8pc of ministerial positions

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladeshi women hold eight per cent of the ministerial positions against the global percentage of seven and the regional percentage of only four, according to the 'Progress of Nations Report 1997' released by the Unicef in Dhaka yesterday.

The percentage of women at top levels of government is three each in India and South Korea, four each in Pakistan and Indonesia, five in the Philippines, six each in Japan, China and Malaysia, seven in Vietnam and one in North Ko-

rea. There is no woman holding any ministerial position in Cambodia, Republic of Lao, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Singapore

Unicef report

and Thailand. In the regional list of East/South Asia and Pacific, only Australia (15 pc), Bhutan (13 pc), Sri Lanka (13 pc) and New Zealand (9 pc) rank above Bangladesh.

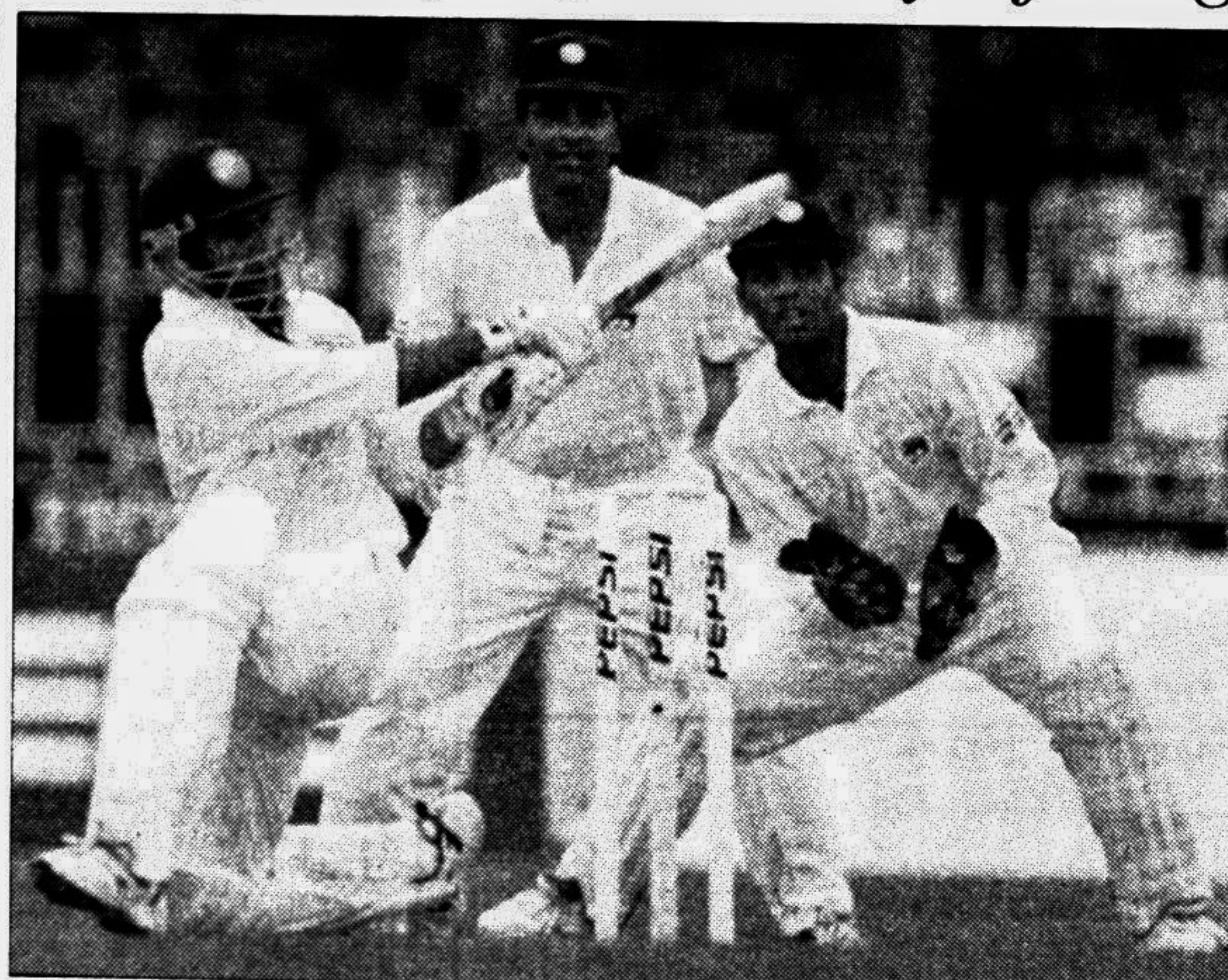
women in the Americas is 10 with Haiti topping with 29 pc and the United States 14 pc. In Europe, it is 10 pc with Sweden leading with 38 pc, Sub-Saharan Africa 7 pc, Central Asia 3 pc, and Middle East and North Africa 2 pc.

The report mentioned that 97 per cent population in Bangladesh have access to safe drinking water, which is a great success for the country.

Launching the report at a city hotel, Unicef Representative in Bangladesh Rolf C. Car-

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Bangladesh fall away after good start



Bangladesh batsman Atahar Ali Khan sweeps the ball as Sri Lankan wicket keeper Lanka de Silva and captain Arjuna Ranatunga watch it during yesterday's match of Asia Cup Tournament in Colombo. -AP/UNB photo

COLOMBO, July 22: Sanath Jayasuriya blasted a hurricane 108 off 83 balls as world champions Sri Lanka cruised to an easy 103-run win over Bangladesh in the Asia Cup here today, reports AP.

The dashing left-hander cracked 14 boundaries and three sixes as the Sri Lankans, sent in to bat, made light of a damp wicket to rattle up 296 for four from 46 overs.

Bangladesh, granted official

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one-day status last month after qualifying for the next World Cup, managed only 193 for eight in reply in a match reduced to 46 overs-a side due to overnight rain.

The Sri Lankans, already assured of a place in Saturday's final after defeating both India and Pakistan in their first two matches, ended the preliminary league with an all-win record.

India, the defending champions, take on Bangladesh in the last league match on Thursday needing to score at seven runs an over to topple Pakistan on run-rate.

Jayasuriya, who took 27 runs in one over from Bangladesh captain Akram Khan including three sixes featured in an opening stand of 171 with Marvan Atapattu, who scored 60.

Sri Lankan captain Arjuna Ranatunga hit a run-a-ball 51

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UNHCR protests repatriation of Rohingyas without verification

By Reaz Ahmad

Repatriation of Rohingya refugees resumed on Sunday after remaining suspended for 80 days amidst allegations of forced repatriation of 187 refugees belonging to 45 families.

A UNHCR official in Dhaka Monday claimed that the government resumed the process without allowing the UNHCR field staff to verify the Rohingyas' willingness to go back home. No tests on physical fitness of the refugees for the journey was carried out, he alleged.

The official said UNHCR lodged a protest with the government on Sunday. Refugee

and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU), a non-government organisation, also expressed concern over, what it said, reports of forced repatriation of a number of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar.

Additional Foreign Secretary Aminul Islam denied the allegations of forced repatriation. Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, he stressed that the repatriation was carried out following "normal procedures" and that the list of refugees to be repatriated on Sunday was sent to UNHCR authorities beforehand.

The additional foreign secretary said they received a letter

from the UNHCR which contained allegations that it was "not provided with the scope to verify."

A high official of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief also refuted the UNHCR claim and said that government had to maintain a 'tight schedule' to meet the mid-August deadline.

Foreign Ministry officials told this correspondent that in the current phase of repatriation, the process has been made a little faster to meet the August 15 deadline for repatriation of 7,000 refugees. Myanmar authorities had earlier requested

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HC admits petition on holding IFIC Bank AGM

By Staff Correspondent

The Company Bench of the High Court yesterday admitted a petition filed by two shareholders of IFIC bank for holding the next Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the bank under a court-appointed chairman.

Justice A T M Monwar Uddin presided over the bench.

Barrister Fakrudin Mahmud appeared for the petitioners. Barrister Rafiqul Haq, appearing for IFIC, objected to the admission of the petition, contending that it was not maintainable.

However, the judge, after hearing both the sides, overruled the objection of Barrister Rafiqul Haq and issued notices on the IFIC Bank, all its directors, Ministry of Finance, Banking Division, Governor of the Bangladesh Bank and Registrar of Joint Stock Companies

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Rohingya refugees demonstrate in Nayapara camp

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, July 22: A total of 212 Rohingya refugees were repatriated to Myanmar from the Kutupalong camp today.

Some 3000 refugees in Nayapara, another camp in the district, who are not willing to go back to Myanmar, prevented the Red Crescent men from distributing weekly ration today.

They demonstrated inside the camp expressing their reluctance to return to Myanmar.

Till today, a total of 2,29,464 refugees were repatriated. There are 21,413 refugees awaiting repatriation.

2 commit suicide in city

By Staff Correspondent

Two persons committed suicide in the city yesterday. One Anwar Hossain, 20, a factory worker committed suicide at 2 pm at his house at Gandaria.

Local people recovered the body and sent it to DMCH. Further details were not available.

A housewife committed suicide at Ajampur, Uttara, by taking poison.

Police said, Nurjahan Begum, 35, wife of a bus driver, took poison at about 5 pm. The body was sent to DMCH.

Separate cases were filed.

Congestion surcharge

CPA to send team to Singapore

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, July 22: The Chittagong Port authorities are expected to send a delegation to Singapore next month. The delegation will meet the Chittagong Feeder Trade Committee and request it to withdraw the decision imposing congestion surcharge on container cargo, port sources said.

The Chittagong Feeder Trade Committee (CFTC), a Singapore-based organisation of feeder vessel operators, has decided to impose surcharge from August 15 at the rate of 150 dollars on 20 feet containers and 300 dollars on 40 feet containers.

The decision came following congestion at the Chittagong Port caused by frequent labour unrest and natural calamities.

The Chittagong Port authorities have already protested the CFTC's decision to impose congestion surcharge.

Khaleda tells Sramik Dal in city Oust govt before country becomes a vassal state

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia has said the government must be ousted before it gets enough time to turn Bangladesh into a vassal state, reports UNB.

She alleged that since assumption of office "this anti-people government has been busy implementing the blueprint of a neighbouring country to destroy people, democracy and whatever the country has."

Now, she said, the government has almost completed its preparation for making the country a vassal state by pursuing weak-kneed policies. "So, it can't be given enough time to ruin the country."

The BNP leader was addressing the 4th biennial council of

Dhaka city unit of the Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal, the labour front of the BNP, at the Engineers' Institution in the city yesterday.

"We have to wage unitedly a tough movement against this government, because we don't want to see famine, dependency and curse of unemployment anymore," she said adding that none is safe in the hands of this government.

Even the children of the country are not safe as there is panic everywhere of childlifting. On the other hand, Begum Zia said, many had to die on suspicion of being childlifters.

Guardians cannot feel secure after sending their wards to schools because they do not know whether their children

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Setting up of rail track on JMB may be delayed

By Nazmul Ashraf, back from JMB site

Train service through the Jamuna Bridge from the day of opening of the bridge has become uncertain because the government is yet to decide on the type of rail track to be set up, according to officials.

The bridge is expected to be opened for traffic on July 1 next year.

Setting up of rail track on the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge (JMB) will not be possible with completion of the bridge unless the contracting company gets work order within this month, engineers at the site said. The delay is due to the authorities' indecision

about the type of rail track to be installed on the bridge, they claimed.

The government was earlier given a June 30 deadline to pass an instruction to the construction firm — Hyundai Company of South Korea — to go ahead with setting up of trackbed on the bridge, but no such order has yet been given, they said.

They however informed that a meeting at the JMB headquarters on June 30 discussed matters in connection with opening the bridge on July one next as well as installation of broad gauge track.

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Some more city roads to be made one-way

The coordination committee of different government agencies yesterday decided to make some more city roads one-way for traffic and some others rickshaw-free to ease traffic jam, reports BSS.

At a meeting chaired by Mayor Mohammad Hanif, the committee also decided to construct some new link roads to avoid traffic jam on the turning points of the city.

The meeting noted that the water-logging problem in the city has been removed substantially. It also reviewed the development of the committee's earlier decisions and proposals.

Director General of Bangladesh Railway, Chairman of T and T Board, Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, Chairman of BRTC, Acting Managing Director of Dhaka

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Metropolitan Sessions Court from Jan next

By Mizan Ali

The government has decided to start functioning of the Metropolitan Court of Sessions (MCS) from January next year.

According to sources in the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, in the first phase the MCS would be established only in Dhaka, then in Chittagong and subsequently in other metropolitan cities.

The Law Ministry has suggested creation of a post of one Metropolitan Sessions Judge, five Metropolitan Additional Sessions Judges and seven Metropolitan Assistant Sessions Judges.

Sources in the Establish-

ment Ministry said that they had agreed in principle for creation of the posts for the MCS to be set up in Dhaka.

Officials of the Law Ministry observed that the MCS would have the jurisdiction to try only sessions cases of the metropolitan area while the Court of District and Sessions Judge would try both civil and criminal cases.

The proposal is now awaiting sanction and clearance from the Ministry of Finance.

The draft proposal, prepared by the ministry, said, the trial of criminal cases by the judges

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