

JCD calls strike at DU from today

By DU Correspondent
Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student wing of BNP, has called an indefinite strike at the Dhaka University (DU) from today protesting 'capture' of Surya Sen Hall by activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and the authorities, 'failure' to rehabilitate JCD activists in the hall.

Addressing a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday, JCD leaders also announced a programme which included rally at the Aparajeo Bangla at the university on July 28, strike in all educational institutions in Dhaka City on July 29 and a rally in front of the Press Club on July 30.

A tougher programme will be announced from the July 30. See Page 12 Col 3

DU exams postponed

An emergency meeting of teachers' representatives in the Dhaka University Syndicate yesterday decided to postpone all examinations scheduled for today and tomorrow, reports BSS.

The decision was taken for unavoidable reasons, a press release of the university said. Fresh dates for the postponed examinations would be announced later.

The meeting held with Vice Chancellor Prof. AK Azad Chowdhury in the chair called upon all concerned including the student organisations to extend their cooperation for holding examinations and running academic programmes.

UNB adds: Resident students of the Dhaka University who are unable to stay at their respective dormitories for 'special reason' have been asked to contact their hall provost concerned immediately.

The call was made at a meeting of Standing Committee of DU Provosts yesterday that also urged resident students to stay at their respective halls.

The meeting, presided over by the vice-chancellor, expressed concern over the prevailing campus situation.

Schoolboy stabbed to death in Narayanganj

From Our Correspondent
NARAYANGANJ, July 26: A schoolboy was killed and three others injured when they came under attack by a local group here yesterday.

Ayubur Rahman Babu, 16, a student of Delpara High School, was stabbed by an armed group in a tea stall in west Delpara area after a hot exchange of words, Fatullah Thana police said. Three others were also stabbed during the incident.

Babu died after he was taken to Narayanganj Sadar Hospital. One seriously injured Mamun, 18, has been admitted at the Chest Diseases Institute and Hospital at Mahakkhal in the capital. Salah Uddin, 18, Selim, 19, Nantu 21 were also admitted at the Narayanganj Sadar Hospital, police added.

Mujibur Rahman, the father of the victim, filed a murder case with the Fatullah Thana. Police arrested one Jahangir, 17, in this connection. The body has been kept in Narayanganj hospital for autopsy.

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Gas, oil exploration in 6 blocks 2 multinationals offer to invest \$200m

By Sharier Khan

Two multinational oil and gas companies, Shell Oil and Cairn Plc, have jointly submitted proposals for an initial investment of 200 million US dollars for gas and oil exploration in six blocks, official sources said.

As per the proposals submitted by the Shell-Cairn joint venture in the Second Bid Round for 15 exploration blocks which concluded on July 15 last, the joint venture will target discovery of reserves of over 11 trillion cubic feet of gas

in these six blocks. These are: block 19 (in Bay of Bengal near Hatiya), blocks 9 and 6 (covering Shariatpur to Brahmanbaria), block 5 (southwest Sundarbans) and blocks 10 and 7 (covering Chandpur to Barisal).

The Shell-Cairn joint venture submitted the highest number of proposals in the bidding which was participated by 21 companies including BAPEX, the exploration wing of Petrobangla.

As per the proposal, the

Dutch-British joint venture will begin drilling in the first year of contract. It offered initial drilling of 22 exploration wells in these blocks involving a direct investment of 750 million US dollars. Sources said, associated investment in 'transmission and downstream infrastructure' will ultimately exceed two billion dollars.

Some 28 proposals were submitted by the foreign companies on July 15, roughly outlining an investment of two

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BNP stages countrywide demonstration today

By Staff Correspondent

BNP will stage demonstrations across the country today in protest against the government move to rename the Zia International Airport.

As part of the countrywide programme, a protest rally will be held in front of the BNP's Naya Paltan central office in the capital at 4 pm, said a press release.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, MP, in a statement urged the all

metropolitan city and district town units of the party to organise protest rallies and procession. He called upon the countrymen to register their protests against dropping Zia's name by attending today's programme.

Meanwhile, a meeting of city BNP and its front organisations today said the government has romped a dangerous game to change the name of the Zia International Airport.

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Rohingya refugees dig trenches around camps

By Reaz Ahmad

Representatives of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) will hold talks with officials of Foreign Ministry today in Dhaka against the backdrop of continuing anti-repatriation demonstrations by Rohingyas in Cox's Bazar.

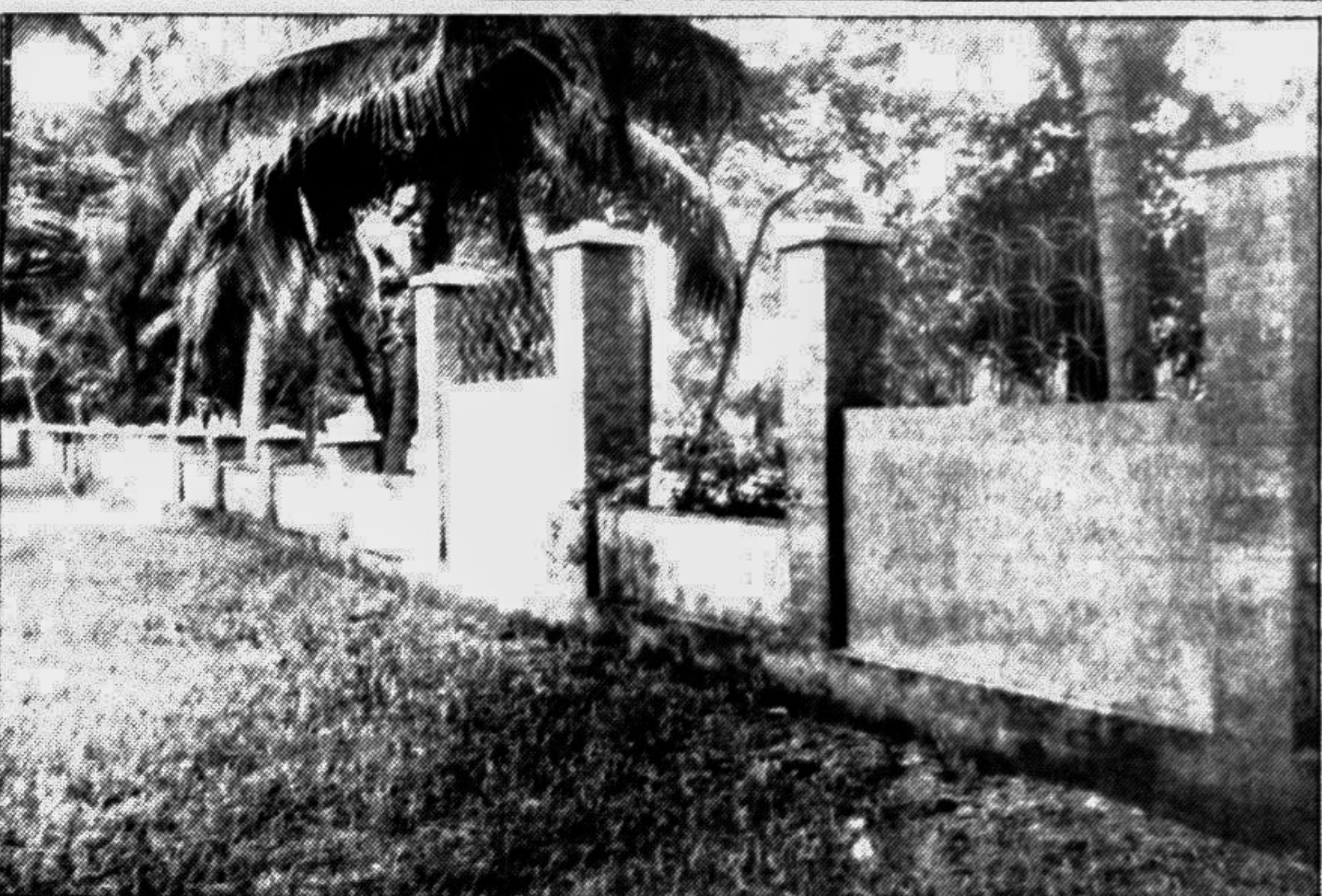
UNHCR mission chief in Myanmar, Thang Quyen Sang, will also join the talks, a high official of the ministry told this correspondent, confirming today's meeting. Earlier on Thursday, UNHCR mission chief in Bangladesh, Arun Salangarm had also told this correspondent about today's meeting.

In Cox's Bazar, militant Rohingyas opposed to repatriation dug trenches around the Naya-para and Kutupalong refugee

camps yesterday and turned down fresh offer for talks, made by Refugee and Repatriation Commissioner (RRC) AQM Qamrul Huda, our correspondent Abdul Monayem Khan reported. The refugees also refused their weekly ration for the sixth day yesterday. The RRC, DC and SP of Cox's Bazar also held talks with the local MP, Mohammad Ali in a bid to calm down the agitating Rohingyas. Mohammad Ali, along with the Chairman and members of the local union parishad visited the camps to assure the refugees that none would be forced to go back to Myanmar.

But the refugees demanded a "written assurance" from the government in this regard before talks.

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Samples of boundary wall to be constructed around Ramna Park in the city. —Star photo

Gujral offers unconditional talks with Kashmir rebels

SRINAGAR (India), July 26: Indian Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral today offered for the first time to hold talks without pre-conditions with Muslim separatist guerrillas in the strife-torn northern state of Kashmir, reports AFP.

"I am ready to talk without any conditions with those misguided people with guns just like we have done with tribal militants of Nagaland," he announced in Qazikund, 80 kilometres south from Srinagar.

Gujral's offer for uncondi-

tional talks with the guerrillas in Kashmir is the first ever made by an Indian prime minister.

In 1995, the then Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao agreed to hold talks but had said the Muslim militants must first surrender, and that the talks would be held 'within the framework of the Indian Constitution'.

The offer was conveyed to the militant organisations by the then internal security minister Rajesh Pilot, and rejected

by the separatists. More than 20,000 people have died in Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state, since 1989 when Muslim separatists launched an anti-Indian campaign in the Himalayan territory.

The prime minister, who launched the laying of a railway line which will link Kashmir with rest of the country, also urged Pakistan to work for peace with its South Asian rival India.

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Naga rebels agree to ceasefire for 3 months

NEW DELHI, July 26: India signed a three-month ceasefire with separatist guerrillas in Nagaland yesterday, paving the way for political talks over the future of the troubled north eastern state, reports AFP.

Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral told parliament that the pact was signed with the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), the chief militant group in the Christian-majority state.

"It has been agreed to ceasefire for three months and initiate discussions at the political level. The government is also in touch with other groups in the state to suspend their militant activities," Gujral said.

"The confrontations with militant groups have led to loss of life, seriously disturbed public order and thwarted the economic development of the state. The people are fed with the violence," Gujral said.

Three other NSCN splinter groups have also agreed to abide by the ceasefire, the prime minister said, adding that the government has not made any commitments to the Naga insurgents.

The NSCN had already been holding secret negotiations with the Indian government to end its five-decade long campaign for a separate homeland which has cost thousands of lives.

World champs Lanka snatch Asia Cup from India

COLOMBO, July 26: One-day masters Sri Lanka snatched the Asia Cup from India's grasp with an awesome eight-wicket demolition of Sachin Tendulkar's men in the final here today, reports AFP.

In one of the most scintillating displays of limited overs cricket in recent times, the Sri Lankans outplayed the dazed Indians before a full house of 32,000 home fans at the Premadasa Stadium.

The world champions picked up six breathtaking catches to restrict the Indians to 239 for seven after Tendulkar had won the toss and elected to take first strike on a slow wicket.

The Sri Lankans, fired by a first wicket stand of 137 off 18 overs between openers Sanath Jayasuriya and Marvan Atapattu, overhauled the score in just the 37th over.

The pair hammered 49 runs in the first four overs and 98 by the 10th with a flurry of boundaries off the Indian attack comprising just three frontline bowlers.

Jayasuriya cracked seven boundaries and two sixes in a blazing 63 off 52 balls before falling to debutant left-arm spinner Niles Kulkarni.

Man-of-the-match Atapattu made 84 not out, following his knocks of 80 versus Pakistan, 31 against India and 60 against Bangladesh in the preliminary league.

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Sri Lankan skipper Arjuna Ranatunga shows the Asia Cup shortly after winning the title by thrashing India to an eight wicket win yesterday at the Premadasa Stadium in Colombo. —AFP/UNB photo

Fund for Gorai dredging assured Netherlands to join other donors in building Ganges Barrage

The Netherlands is willing to join a global consortium to construct the Ganges Barrage, but unwilling to take a lead in organising the group, the visiting Dutch minister said yesterday, reports UNB.

Jan P Pronk, the Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation, who held official-level talks here, said international agencies like the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank should initiate the group.

"We are willing to join the consortium, but we are too small to lead," he told a press conference in the NEC conference room in the capital, ending his week-long visit to one of its main aid-recipient countries.

Finance Minister Shah AMS

Kibria, who led a Bangladesh team in the official-level meeting on Wednesday, also spoke at the joint news conference, welcoming the Dutch gesture for providing assistance for the planned Ganges Barrage.

"The Ganges Barrage Project is an ambitious one. We also need support from other countries and agencies... the Japanese government has already indicated their willingness to provide fund for the project," he said.

The Ganges Barrage, still at the planning level, may require at least six billion US dollars, according to the preliminary estimates by government officials.

The Netherlands' willing-

ness to participate in the international consortium for the construction of the barrage is part of the European country's interest in Bangladesh's water sector.

"These are not merely engineering works, it's the survival of your people," said Pronk, whose deltaic country has a lot of experiences in water management and land reclamation.

He said his country has been working on a master plan for the overall development of the Meghna Delta which is "one of the most fascinating water in the world". The plan will include protection arrangements.

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High wall to be raised around Ramna Park

By Staff Correspondent

The Public Works Department (PWD) is planning to raise a high wall around the Ramna Park of the city, official sources said.

Engineers, architects and town planners concerned said the decision contradicted the proposed plan to build the Sonar Bangla Cultural Village in the area.

The City Division of the PWD has also completed construction of a gate opposite to the Engineers' Institution, which has been named Bolshakhi Gate. A BUET architect said this was beyond comprehension how the department was building something at a place where a massive project was underway.

A top official of the PWD's City Division said a Tk 40 lakh project to improve Ramna Park was now awaiting approval of

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Plan to survey state of fish resources

By Govinda Shil

The government plans to conduct a thorough survey of the inland and coastal waters and the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the Bay of Bengal to determine the state of the country's fish resources.

It is just one of the five fisheries projects under the 1997-1998 Annual Development Programme. The five projects will cost about Tk 200 crore and will be included in the Fifth Five Year Plan, according to official sources.

The proposed survey, involving about Tk 52 crore, will ex-

amine management of inland and coastal fisheries and that in the EEZ in the Bay.

The country's coast line is about 700 km from east to west, beginning from Teknaf and ending at the Sundarbans. According to an international sea convention, an EEZ of a country starts from its sea shore and spreads over 200 nautical miles (363 km) in the sea.

Two other projects will expand the capacity of shrimp and prawn hatcheries at a cost of about Tk 20 crore while a Tk

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Gas well fire: Affected people call hartal

From Iqbal Siddiquee

SYLHET, July 26: A non-political forum Kamolganj Gana Oikya Parishad has been formed to protest the "irresponsible activities of Occidental" and to press for immediate solution of the crisis arising out of the Magurchhara Gasfield fire.

The forum, floated at a big rally yesterday at Kamolganj Thana under Moulvibazar, announced an agitation programme.

The programme includes gherao of the Thana Nirbahi Officer's office tomorrow (July 27), rally and 'Padajatra' towards Magurchhara Gasfield on July 29 and six-hour hartal at Kamolganj Thana on July 31. The programme was announced at yesterday's rally with Muhibur Rahman Chashi in the chair.

The rally also demanded immediate constitution of a Parliamentary committee to assess the extent of losses caused by the gasfield fire.

Ctg faces severe loadshedding

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, July 26: The first unit of 210MW Raosan power station remained shut for the past four days, causing a power supply crisis in Chittagong, PDB sources said today.

The unit tripped on Wednesday, the sources added. Consequently, the greater Chittagong region which requires 320 MW power on normal working days, has been facing severe loadshedding for the past few days. Chittagong has to bear a loadshedding of more than 60 MW daily, the sources said.

Chittagong received only 226 MW out of total generated power of 370 MW today, the sources added.

They said today 180 MW were generated by the second unit of Raosan power station and 190 MW by the Kapitai power plant.

Of them, 100 MW power were taken to Dhaka and rest 44 MW were recorded as line-loss.

Gold worth Tk 30 lakh seized at ZIA

By Staff Correspondent

Customs personnel seized gold worth about Tk 30 lakh from a passenger at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) yesterday and arrested him.

The passenger, Mojibur Rahman, 30, came from Singapore by a Biman flight that landed at the ZIA at about 5 pm. Forty-two gold bars, each weighing 10 tolas, and ornaments weighing 67.50 grams were recovered from his possession.

Mojibur Rahman, who hails from Sirajdikhan in Munshiganj, was handed over to Cantonment police.

Lightning kills 7 at Chilmari

BHERAMARA, July 26: Seven people were killed and 20 others injured by lightning at Chilmari under Daulatpur Thana on July 22 last, reports BSS.

The dead were identified as Kalu, 34, Zahidul, 12, Inna, 14, Lashkar, 24, Ifat, 13, Shakur, 18 and Khirul 15.

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