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JRC meet ends: Consensus on building Teesta embankment

LALMONIRHAT, Aug 13: Water experts from Bangladesh and India have reached a consensus at Shilguri to build a 1.75 kilometer embankment on the south bank of the river Teesta, official sources said, reports BSS.

The four-day meet of the water experts concluded today at Shilguri in the Jalpaiguri District of India.

The meet, which began at Teesta barrage project rest house — 'Abasar' at Doani in Lalmonirhat, was adjourned on August 11.

The Leader of the Indian experts Suresh Chandra said after the completion of the proposed embankment, construction of another embankment on the other bank of the river will be considered in the next JRC meet.

The experts visited the bank of the river at Permechgonj in Jalpaiguri district. They also visited different sections of Teesta barrage and some important canals in Jalpaiguri during the second round of talks.

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DOE for urgent steps to save Buriganga

By Special Correspondent

The Buriganga is shrinking fast as at least 113 encroachers are choking its flow with different establishments like mills and factories, dockyards, slums and bazars.

The river is 'sick' and cannot support aquatic life in nine places between Mirpur bridge to Pagla, a Department of Environment (DOE) survey said.

To save the river from encroachments and pollution, a coordinated drive by different government agencies, the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and people should be launched immediately, Saliyd Mosharaf Hossain, DG of DOE told a group of journalists yesterday.

Releasing a survey conducted between July 19 and 30 on both banks of the river, he told the members of Forum for Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB) that there should be a 'Buriganga Authority' to save it.

He said the issue would be raised before the coordination committee of DCC and measures would be taken to remove the encroachments like industries, businesses, dockyards and slums built on the river bed.

To determine the legality of their ownership, the Land Administration, DCC, Dhaka district administration and BI-WTA should conduct a joint survey to restore the banks of the river so that the encroachers can be taken care of, he suggested.

A campaign would be launched to create awareness among people, particularly those living on the riverside, to take action against the encroachers and those dumping effluents, he said.

The DG said the extent of pollution has reached such a proportion that the river has become 'septic' at nine places where aquatic life cannot survive. Survival of aquatic life needs a minimum of 4 mg of oxygen per litre of water.

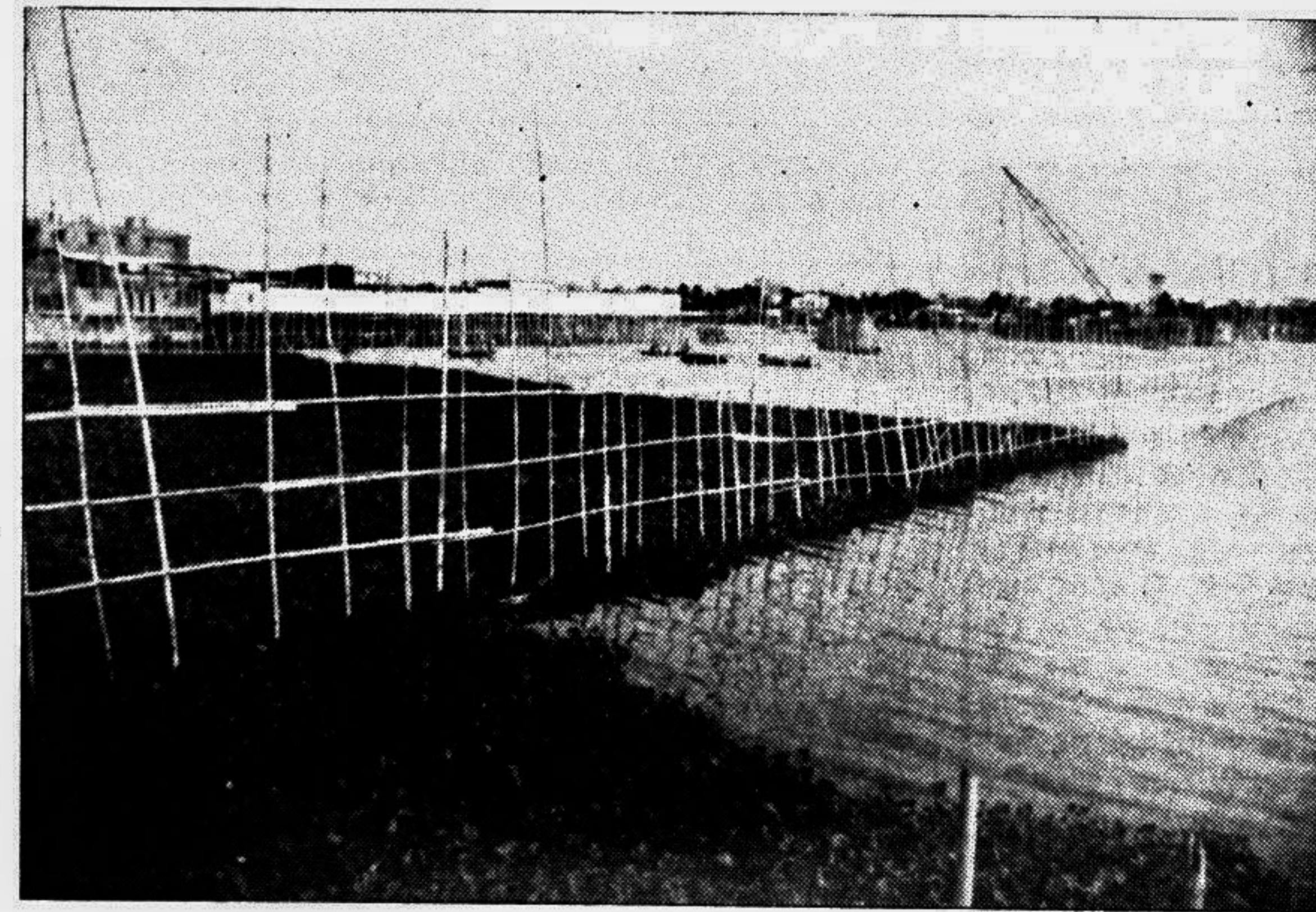
During a survey carried out by the DOE between March and May this year, it was found that the river water is unfit for domestic use because of high level of different chemicals, including chromium and different solid wastes, garbage, excreta and other pollutants.

"It has been going on for decades. But the current situation calls for an urgent action as it is like raping the river and choking it to death," the DG said.

Once people used to go for a fresh air and walk on its banks. But different kinds of establishments have taken over the walkways and the air is filled with foul smell, he added. Unabated encroachments by influential people including politicians have shrunk the river reducing its navigability making it unable to bear excess load of water in monsoon, he added.

Prominent in the DOE list of encroachers are: Haji Selim, Najimur Rahman Manju, 'SP' Mahbub, AG Mahmud and Major Nasir. The encroachers also include, the Karnafuli Textile Mills, Five Star Textiles, Hatil Complex Ltd, quarter of the class four employees of Sir Salimullah Medical College, Alam Tower, Alam Shipyard, Kerishah Dockyard, Tariq Dock, Khawja Market, Monowara Plaza and National King Fan.

Besides, seven people have raised bamboo structures on a cremation ground on the river bank.



Encroachments choking the Buriganga

— Star photo

Donors to fund projects to fight arsenic contamination

By Staff Correspondent

The World Bank, UNDP and the British Department of International Development (DFID) are embarking on several large scale projects to fight arsenic contamination in the country.

A World Bank mission will arrive here on August 25 to prepare a project on an emergency basis to tackle the poisoning situation that had affected people in at least 24 districts, said Pierre Landell-Mills, Resident Representative of the World Bank mission in Dhaka, yesterday.

He said the project would be launched in "the fastest humanly possible time."

The UNDP will fund a 300,000 US dollar emergency project for six months beginning this month in 200 most affected villages in 50 unions. This will ensure short-term provision of arsenic free water to the most affected people. It will also undertake a comprehensive epidemiological survey of the total population of the 200 villages and test all drinking water sources.

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Ganges flowing above danger mark

The Ganges has already crossed the danger level at Pankha and is flowing 10 cm above the red mark, according to a message of Flood Information Centre of BWDB yesterday, reports BSS.

Char areas of Shibganj and Chapainawabganj Sadar thanas are likely to be inundated within 24 hours, the centre warned.

Low-lying areas of Goalundo north of Rajbari district, Nawabganj and Dohar thanas of Dhaka district and Srirang, Louhajang and Tongibari thanas of Munshiganj district are also likely to be flooded within 48 hours.

During the period, the Ganges is likely to flow 25 cm above danger level at Goalundo and 12 cm above danger level at Shibganj.

The Ganges and the Brahmaputra continued to rise at all points while rivers in the Meghna and the south eastern hill basins also recorded rise at most points yesterday.

Abul Hossain's letter yet to be forwarded to President

By Staff Correspondent

The resignation letter of State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Syed Abul Hossain was not sent to President Shahabuddin Ahmed for his acceptance till last night, said Cabinet Division sources.

Four days have passed since the State Minister resigned on Sunday last. His resignation followed a visit to Singapore on August 3 last without government's permission, carrying an ordinary passport instead of diplomatic one.

Meanwhile, sources in the government confirmed that no move is being taken to lodge case against him for possession of the passport.

It is pointed out by the country's press that more than one passport at a time is an offence which may lead to imprisonment for six-month and monetary penalty as well.

BNP must take a more long term view of student politics

By Mahfuz Anam

We unambiguously and in the strongest of terms condemn the behaviour of the members of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) for their unpardonable behaviour of throwing up eggs and shoes at Dhaka University Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof. A.K. Azad and Proctor Dr. Nur-un-Nabi, along with some of his colleagues, during the so-called rehabilitation process of the students who were recently displaced from their respective dormitories due to the rivalry of the student fronts of Awami League (AL) and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). The responsibility for the humiliation suffered by the VC and his senior staff rests solely and indisputably with the JCD who broke the terms of an under-

standing voluntarily reached in the Paribesh Parishad (Joint body of student parties to improve the general environment of Dhaka University). We think that the VC showed tremendous patience, self-restraint and cool-headedness — at the cost of some us thinking that he was lowering the prestige of his office and giving too much importance to student fronts of political parties — and did succeed to a large extent in bringing the feuding sides not only to the talking table but also in coming to some agreements as to how to restore academic atmosphere to the trouble torn university.

The question of the moment is what happened in the last 24 hours so to deteriorate the situation as to necessitate the JCD

to humiliate the VC in such a manner. Let us not forget this very important fact that whatever else has happened in the campus in the last several years no student organisation has so humiliated the VC.

The so-called rehabilitation process started on the basis of an understanding reached on August 9 by the Paribesh Parishad, according to which students' halls were to be vacated for two hours on August 12 and bona fide students rehabilitated in the presence of JCD and BCL leaders. On Monday JCD raised an objection saying that the process should commence from a BCL held hall instead of a JCD held one. In our editorial yesterday we supported this.

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Identity cards of students being checked in presence of VC Prof AK Azad Chowdhury at Ziaur Rahman Hall of Dhaka University yesterday before allowing them to enter the dormitory. — Star photo

Only BNP can save country, says Khaleda

BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday said common people were gradually becoming aggrieved over the present government's 'misrule', reports UNB.

"In the present situation, the people cannot carry out their business or service smoothly, even perform religion without any hindrance," she told while welcoming the newcomers, to her party at 29 Minto Road, official residence of the Leader of the Opposition.

A large number of Jatiya Party leaders and workers from Barguna, including district JP General Secretary MA Bari Badal, Shahjahan Kabir, Aziz Latif and Ziaul Hasan, called on Begum Zia and joined the BNP at the function.

Begum Zia said all patriotic people were rallying round BNP which is the only force to save the country from the grave situation.

"It is the duty of each and every politician who believes in country's independence and

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They are threatening movement to protect Aug 15 killers: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the motive for threatening movement against the government is to protect the killers of Bangabandhu through foiling their trial, reports UNB.

"Do they want to stall the process of trial of the killers by threatening to wage a movement against the government?" asked the Prime Minister while speaking at a discussion meeting at the Engineers Institute.

Bangabandhu Parishad arranged the discussion on 'The Dream of Bangabandhu and Bangladesh in 21st Century' to mark the National Mourning Day.

"Conspirators are still active," said Hasina, questioning the ground for threatening movement when people's right to vote has been established, and there is a system to change power through election under caretaker government.

"Their main objective is to protect the self-proclaimed killers, and to stop the process of trial of the killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman," she told the meeting.

Talking to OCAB members on Tuesday, Opposition Leader Begum Khaleda Zia, spoke about possibility of launching anti-government movement and also of snap polls.

What is the reason behind creating obstacle when the government is trying to establish a poverty and hunger-free nation, the Prime Minister posed a question and called upon all to cooperate with the government in realising the dreams of Bangabandhu to establish a 'Sonar Bangla'.

Paying tribute to the father of the nation and his family members who were killed on

See Page 12 Col 6

Nation pays homage to Bangabandhu tomorrow

The nation will pay homage to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman tomorrow on the 22nd anniversary of his death, reports UNB.

National Mourning Day will be observed for the second time commemorating the killing on August 15, 1975, of the great leader.

The day is a public holiday. While the government has come up with elaborate programmes, various political and socio-cultural organisations have also begun commemorating the day.

National flag will fly half-mast at all government and private buildings, educational institutions, non-government and autonomous bodies and at the Bangladesh missions abroad on the mourning day.

President Sheikhhabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will place wreaths at the portrait of the

See Page 12 Col 5

City College student found dead near Buriganga bridge

Keraniganj police recovered the decomposed body of a college student from near the Buriganga Bridge on Tuesday night, reports BSS.

Police suspected that some unknown assailants murdered him and left the body on the bank of the river Buriganga.

The dead was identified as Shuva Majumder, 21, a first year B Com student of Dhaka City College. The body bore several wound marks. Police seized a private car from near the body of Shuva.

Family sources of the victim alleged that some of his friends called him out of his Wari residence on Sunday last. Since then he did not return home. The family of Shuva lodged a general diary (GD) with Sutrapur police.

The body was handed over to his relatives after autopsy at the Mitford Hospital yesterday afternoon.

Keraniganj police lodged a murder case accusing some of his friends.

PW-7 tells Court I heard eleven armymen were involved in killing

By Staff Correspondent

Lt Col (LPR) Abul Bashar, seventh prosecution witness in the Bangabandhu murder case, has said he had come to the then President's residence on August 15, 1975 at around noon and found that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family members were already killed.

Bashar said he was an Army Captain and 'overall in-charge' of troops brought from Comilla for guarding Bangabandhu's residence and the Ganabhaban from August 1, 1975.

He was being cross-examined by lawyers of the state defence on completion of his deposition in the Court of District and Sessions Judge, Dhaka, yesterday.

Bashar also said, "On my return to the Regiment, I later came to know from the officers, JCOs and NCOs that Maj Rashid, Maj Farook, Maj Dalim,

Maj Bazul Huda, Maj Mohiuddin (Lancer), Maj Muhiuddin (Artillery), Maj Noor, Maj Rashed Chowdhury, Maj Shahriar, Raisaider Muslehuddin (Lancer), Maj Aziz Pasha and others were involved in the killing of Bangabandhu and his family on August 15, 1975.

The deposition was recorded amidst objections from the defence side. PW-7, at the end of his deposition, also identified three of the five accused in custody. They are: Farook, Muhiuddin and Wahab Joarder.

During his two-hour long deposition, Bashar told the court that by the end of July, 1975, he had received an order to guard the residence of Bangabandhu at Rd No 32, Dhanmandi and the Ganabhaban.

Chief Special Public Prosecutor (SPP) Serajul Huq and Ramzan Ali Khan took down

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Sculptures to be installed at city points

The government will install sculptures at different points of the capital keeping pace with the national culture, heritage and spirit of the great Liberation War, reports BSS.

This was decided at an inter-ministerial meeting at the Ministry of Cultural Affairs yesterday with State Minister for Cultural Affairs Obaidul Quader in the chair.

The meeting was attended by Secretary-in-Charge of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs Syed Yusuf Hossain, Chief Architect of the Government SA K Masud Ahmad, Director General of Shilpakala Academy Shamsuzzaman Khan, Joint-Secretaries of the Ministry of Public Works, Finance and Civil Aviation and Tourism and high officials from Dhaka City Corporation and RAJUK.

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Zia Hall Provost resigns Syndicate forms body to probe DU incidents

By DU Correspondent

The Dhaka University Syndicate, at an emergency meeting yesterday, formed an eight-member committee to probe Tuesday's incidents on the campus in which the Vice-Chancellor was humiliated and the Proctor's office was ransacked by some activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD).

The committee, headed by Barrister Shawkat Ali, will submit its report within 15 days.

The committee, headed by Barrister Shawkat Ali, will submit its report within 15 days.

Humiliation of VC condemned

By DU Correspondent

The Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) at an emergency meeting yesterday condemned Tuesday's incident on the campus in which the Vice-Chancellor of the university was humiliated by some Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activists.

The meeting, chaired by DUTA President Mustafa

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Salman Shah's death CID questions film director Badal

By Staff Correspondent

The CID is likely to take some more time to complete its investigation into the death of popular filmstar Salman Shah.

"Nothing can be said on the basis of autopsy reports only," said a senior CID official yesterday.

Although a medical board found "nothing new other than suicide," CID investigators said they will have to "check and cross-check many things as it is a very complicated and sensitive case."

The medical board formed to re-examine the two autopsy reports and viscera tests of Salman's body submitted its report to the CID Tuesday.

Meanwhile, the CID interrogated Badal Khandawker, a film director, yesterday but declined to disclose anything.

Sources said the film director had accompanied Salman and his wife Samira from PDC to their Eskaton apartment the night before the filmstar was found dead there in September last year. Salman, his wife Samira and Badal had travelled in the same car that night.

On the day Salman was

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Focus on city crime Extortionists collect crores of taka everyday

By Inam Ahmed and Morshed Ali Khan

Real estates companies, travel agencies and automobile showrooms are the main sources of funds for the city's organised criminals who collect over a million taka everyday as tolls.

Extortion from businesses in the city is so widespread that police fear that the actual money rolling into the 'black hands' everyday might run into crores.

A top police official admitted that almost ninety per cent of the city shops, business houses, private clinics, computer sites, shopping complexes and bazaars pay toll everyday.

"There are big organised toll collectors. In addition there are those who come from the locality and ask for money at the shops," the official said requesting anonymity.

The 'big collector', usually is the one who targets 'big business' and is not happy with small amount. "He is a high-flyer himself and is a well-

known figure in the underworld for his brutal action against anyone refusing to pay. Usually he heads the group that is named after him," the official said.

Usually the police know him but are often unable to pin him down because the victims do not dare to testify against him. Police officials said extortionists also maintain link with the higher echelon of the government.

The small time extortionists are often young men from the locality and are content with small amounts. But every shop, office or vendor must pay or face regular harassment or even eviction.

Another police official said extortion is punishable with seven years imprisonment under Section 385 of the Penal Code. "But it is a bailable offence and in most instances the criminal gets bail within a week and the case keeps lingering on for years while the gang member keeps his operation going."

The police official said the big toll payers such as the developers, industrialists and car traders, rarely complained to the police. "Behind every big deal of extortion there is invariably a political shadow, so the victim keeps mum," he said.

Roadside makeshift shops and hawkers said, in addition

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Ctg Port team to hold talks with CFTC in S'pore today

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 13: The six-member delegation comprising port users and Chittagong port officials will hold a meeting with representatives of the Chittagong Feeder Trade Committee (CFTC), a Singapore-based association of feeder vessels operators, tomorrow to persuade it to withdraw the decision on imposition of congestion surcharge at the port, official sources said.

The delegation left for Singapore yesterday. Earlier, the meeting was scheduled to be held today.

The task force of Chittagong Port suggested for sending the delegation as CFTC decided to

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Vehicles stranded on Kanchpur Bridge for 4 hrs

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Aug 13: Thousands of vehicles were stranded for more than four hours on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway as two trucks broke down on the Kanchpur bridge at around noon yesterday.

Siddhirganj thana police said the traffic came to a standstill from around noon until 4 pm. The trucks broke down while plying on the bridge. Police had to bring in cranes to low the lorries away.