

JRC meet begins Proposal for embankment on Teesta finalised

LALMONIRHAT, Aug 30: The crucial Indo-Bangla talks went on at Doanil till late night tonight to find ways for removing the obstacles to a permanent accord for sharing the water of Teesta river, reports UNB.

The formal Secretary-level meeting of the Indo-Bangla Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) began in the morning at the Teesta Barrage rest house, Abashar.

The two sides finalised a proposal for construction of a 1.8-km embankment, mostly in the Indian territory, on the right bank of the Teesta, officials said.

A 10-member Bangladesh delegation headed by Water Resources Secretary Dr ATM Shamsul Huda and a 9-member Indian delegation led by Water Resources Secretary Mata Prasad took part in the discussion.

They were to formulate the final proposal for a Teesta water-sharing agreement to be signed at the 33rd ministerial meeting of the JRC in New Delhi in November.

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BNP march towards JS today

Main opposition BNP will march towards the Jatiya Sangsad today to protest the price-hike of fuel and other socio-economic malaise, reports UNB.

At 4 pm, the BNP will hold a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club before heading towards parliament in a procession.

Besides, BNP will stage demonstration in all metropolitan cities and district headquarters to press for its demands which include release of all leaders and workers and withdrawal of "false cases."

Meanwhile, Jamaat-e-Islami will also lead a separate procession towards parliament this afternoon to protest the sudden increase of fuel prices.

The Jamaat procession will start from Maghbazar intersection at 4:30 pm.

US Open

Chang, Williams score wins

From Tawfiq Aziz Khan

NEW YORK, Aug 30: Michael Chang does not have to prove that he is a fighter. He had pulled himself out from seemingly desperate situations on so many occasions in the past and he did it Friday night also. Jeff Salzenstein, a 23-year-old outsider from Colorado, disturbed the rhythm of the 'mighty mouse' and before he realised Chang was a set down (4-6). But it happened so many times in his career. The second seed and presently world number two unleashed a vicious attacking game that found Jeff Huffing and perspiring profusely. He was also a tough nut out did lack the experience of his more

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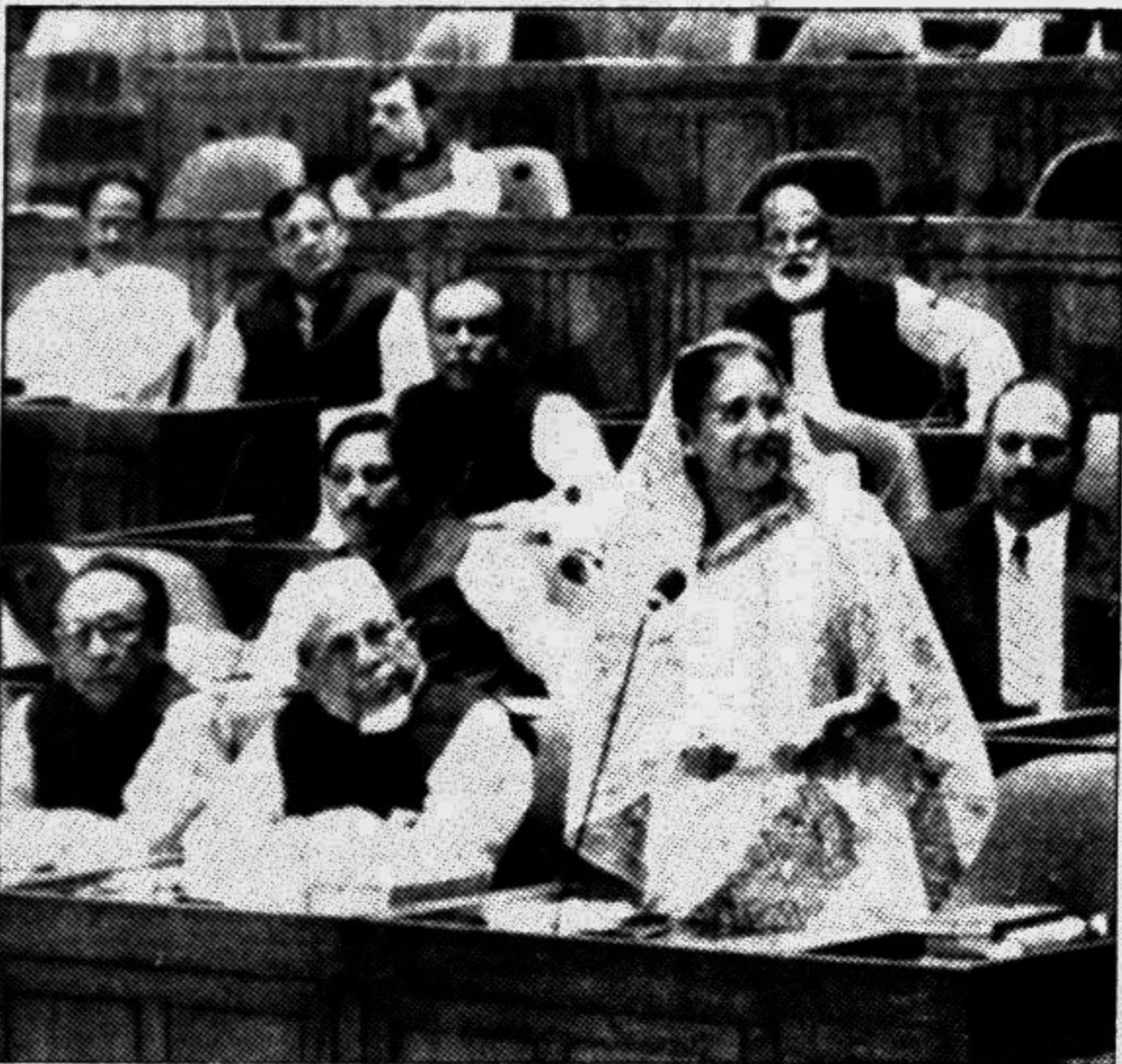
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BNP stages walkout, AL says 'pre-planned'



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaking in the Jatiya Sangsad on the first day of its sixth session yesterday. — PID photo

By Staff Correspondent

The major opposition party in Jatiya Sangsad (JS), Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), staged an angry walkout yesterday, the opening day of the sixth session of Parliament, in protest against the Speaker's "refusal" to allow the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to complete a statement and "interruption" by ruling party MPs when he was on the floor.

Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury and Leader of the House Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina termed the BNP walkout a 'dramatic action' and observed that the incident was illogical and unfortunate.

Four other ministers — Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, LGD Minister Zillur Rahman, Commerce Minister Tofael Ahmed and Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury — who spoke for more than 30 minutes after the walkout, claimed that the BNP went out of the House to implement a pre-planned 'political scheme designed to destroy parliamentary democracy.'

Later, both the Speaker as

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'Accept demands for return to House'

By Staff Correspondent

BNP will refrain from participating in the proceedings of the Jatiya Sangsad until the government takes 'effective steps satisfactory to the party' as regards its 14-point charter of demand.

The party put forward the demands after staging a stormy walkout from the House yesterday evening.

"If they (the government) accept our demands tonight, we'll be back to the House tomorrow... If not, how can we?" Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Sangsad and BNP vice chairman, Prof. AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury told newsmen at his Sangsad Bhavan chamber just after the walkout.

Asked to clarify if his party boycotted parliament session indefinitely, Prof. Chowdhury

and other top leaders of the BNP repeatedly stated they would 'reconsider and reassess' their role as the Opposition in parliament.

"We'll meet everyday or every other day to reconsider our role and the process will go on..." Badruddoza Chowdhury told the crowded news conference and added the party lawmakers are due to meet at 3 pm today.

The 14 demands, as stated by Prof. Chowdhury include: Withdrawal of the enhanced fuel prices, just price for agricultural products and reduction of fertilizer prices, assistance to those who attacked some 20 BNP lawmakers and withdrawal of false cases against the Opposition leaders and workers, an end to the government.

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BNP creating issue out of nothing : PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday blamed opposition BNP for hatching an evil design to disrupt the development activities, reports UNB.

"The BNP does not want people's welfare, they do not want us to work for the people and for economic progress of the nation," she said after the BNP staged a walkout from parliament yesterday.

The Prime Minister urged the main opposition party to return to the House, saying "come back to the House and resolve everything here through discussion."

"It is unfortunate that the BNP today walked out of the House after creating an issue out of nothing. I'm surprised by their unexpected behaviour," she said.

The leader of the House said, "If BNP had an intention to talk on the price-hike of petroleum products, then why didn't they raise the issue in the meeting of parliamentary standing committee."

All the issues including law and order situation and jute and foreign policies came up in the committee meeting, she said.

Questioning the justification of BNP's call for hartal for the fuel price-hike, Hasina said they could discuss the issue in the House by withdrawing the shutdown.

"Does their act of damaging cars make any sense to protest the enhancement of fuel prices?" said the Prime Minister while referring to attacks on a procession of Sammitia Nari Samaj and a meeting of Awami

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Bangladesh play warm-up match in Yangon today

Sports Reporter

The national football team, which is now in Yangon, will play its one-off exhibition match against hosts Myanmar today. The match will kickoff at 3.30 pm (BST).

Bangladesh booters, who had earlier won their first ever international tourney in Myanmar a couple of years back, are taking part in the lone warm-up match as part of their final preparation for the six-nation SAFF championship, scheduled to begin in the Nepalese capital Kathmandu from September 4.

The team is scheduled to reach Kathmandu via Bangkok on Monday.

PM asks ministers at ALPP meet Prepare to face possible Opposition queries

The ruling party yesterday began discussing its strategy to face possible opposition offensive in parliament on major political and economic issues, reports UNB.

The inconclusive meeting of the Awami League Parliamentary Party (ALPP) was adjourned till 3 pm today.

Leader of the House Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina chaired the meeting at Sangsad Bhavan.

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed, Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury, State Minister for

Jute and Textile A K Faezul Huq and Chief Whip Abul Hasnat Abdullah joined the discussion.

Meeting sources said the prime minister asked her cabinet colleagues to prepare their answers to opposition's possible queries on issues like petroleum prices, power crisis, jute, reported bank liquidity crisis and GSP problem facing garments sector.

Begum Matia Chowdhury suggested that bank should disburse required funds immediately so that raw jute could be purchased directly from the growers at fair price.

A number of MPs apprised the prime minister of the low price of jute in their respective constituencies and requested her to take effective steps to ensure reasonable price of the fibre for the growers.

The prime minister was learnt to have told the meeting that she was aware of the situation and personally looking after the matter.

Some members requested the prime minister to gather information about various problems from local members of parliament instead of bureaucrats.

"You will get real and clear picture from MPs, not from bureaucrats," said A S M Ferroz making his appeal to the prime

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21-pt suggestion to improve healthcare services

By Staff Correspondent

Flaws in the healthcare administration are largely responsible for the poor public healthcare system in the country.

It fails to identify major needs of the public healthcare services. At the same time lack of proper management, discipline and above all commitment of those in the healthcare administration has greatly impeded progress of the medicare services.

Speakers at a Roundtable on 'Health Services for the People' held at a city hotel yesterday expressed this view.

The speakers identified some major drawbacks in the existing health policy. They pointed out that there were serious lapses in the health service and the overall government focus on the issue.

Kagal, organiser of the roundtable, presented a 21-point suggestion to address the major problems and ensure better medicare services. The newspaper had already increased public awareness by publishing some of the problems faced by the thana health complexes and district hospitals.

Autonomy for the thana, district and medical college hospitals was included in the suggestions.

Some of the discussants argued that the present infrastructural facilities failed to provide adequate services despite having comparatively good logistic support. Most of the electronic medical devices in the hospitals and thana health complexes were found to be out of order.

Mismanagement was identified as the major cause of this.

Ambulances did not work, doctors' posts were lying vacant and political affiliation of class four employees hindering improvement of healthcare system, they noted.

Representatives from the government side admitted that they had some failures in addressing the management problems. But, one of them, said, "the government alone was not responsible for healthcare discipline. Sincere community participation and most important of all ideas and visions from experts were needed for successful implementation of a policy which shall be appreciated by all sections of the society."

"We have formed 'vigilance team' in every divisional headquarters for proper management."

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Khaleda's visit Envoy to Pakistan asked to prepare detailed report

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh High Commissioner to Pakistan Q M A Rahim has been asked by the Foreign Ministry to furnish a comprehensive report about Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia's recent visit there. It was learnt from diplomatic sources.

The report has been sought against the backdrop of reports that one or more of the self-confessed killers of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had secretly met Begum Zia during her recent visit to Pakistan and also about allegations that two persons involved in the killing — Colonel Rashid and Major Nur — had obtained Pakistani passports.

Meanwhile, Pakistan High Commissioner in Dhaka Karam Elahi talking to The Daily Star yesterday refuted the claims of issuance of Pakistani passports to anyone linked with the killing of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The Pakistan envoy was contacted for his views in the backdrop of reports that the self-confessed killers had a secret meeting with BNP chief

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Judgement in Yasmin murder case today

From Mozammel Haque

RANGPUR, Aug 30: The judgement of Dinajpur's sensational Yasmin rape and murder case will be delivered tomorrow. District and Sessions Judge, Rangpur, Abdul Matin, who is also the Judge of the Special Court, Rangpur will deliver the judgement. Judgement of both parts of the case will be delivered tomorrow.

The trial of all the nine accused were held in the Special Court in two parts.

In the 1st part, three main accused faced trial in the Special Court, Rangpur, under Children and Women Repression Act (64). They are — Moinul Haque, former ASI of Kotwali thana, Dinajpur, Abdus Sattar, former police constable of Dinajpur Police Line and Dr Md Mohsin, Medical Officer of Dinajpur General Hospital.

Forty-six prosecution witnesses out of 54 were testified in the court. They included some journalists of some Dinajpur dailies, advocates of Dinajpur bar, school teachers, police personnel, union parishad members, villagers, businessmen, doctors, investigating officers, magistrates and others.

The offences of negligence to duty, damaging 'alamat', concealing facts and attempting to divert the case. They are — Abdul Mutalib, former Police Superintendent of Dinajpur, Mahtab Hossain, former Kotwali thana Officer-in-Charge, Swapan Chakravarty, former Kotwali thana Sub-Inspector, Matur Rahman, former Officer-in-Charge DSB (watch), Moinul Haque and Jahangir Alam, former Assistant Sub-Inspector of Kotwali thana, Abdus Sattar, former constable, Amrita Lal Barman, former driver of Dinajpur Police Line and Dr Md Mohsin, Medical Officer of Dinajpur General Hospital.

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Talks conclude 'No Indo-Bangla border land dispute'

RAJSHAHI, Aug 30: The two-day border talks between Bangladesh and India ended here today, reports BSS.

Deputy Commissioner, Rajshahi, Kazi Farid Ahmed led a six-member Bangladesh delegation while District Magistrate Murshidabad S K Das led a five-member Indian delegation at the talks.

Briefing newsmen at the circuit house here, both the Bangladesh and Indian team leaders said that they had discussed cross-border smuggling, drugs and small arms trafficking, border crimes and border demarcations between the countries.

They informed the newsmen that "There was no border land dispute between Bangladesh and India including over Nirmal Char and Chandan Shahar Char."

Kazi Farid Ahmed said that there was a total of 143 border pillars between Rajshahi and Murshidabad and of them 123 pillars were missing and 20 were in good condition. This was found after a joint survey conducted by the officials of both the countries, he added.

An official source told BSS that a joint supervision work

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All set for transit to Nepal from tomorrow Strike paralyses Mongla port

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Aug 30: The indefinite strike by 'Mongla Bandar Jahaj' Sramik Shingha, which began yesterday morning has paralysed normal operations at Mongla Port as vessels, launches and foodgrains carrying barges have stopped plying on all routes to and from Khulna.

The workers have gone on strike to realise their 28-point charter of demand.

The strike call already termed illegal by owners of inland river vessels, has been given at a time when Nepal will be using Mongla Port for its seaborne trade from Monday.

Meanwhile, all preparations have been completed by the Mongla Port Authority for giving transit facilities to Nepal.

According to a highly placed

source, Nepal will transit over ten lakh metric tonnes of cargo every year through Mongla Port.

The source said the strike will have an adverse effect on the national economy as importers and shipping agents are to pay over Tk 30 lakh everyday as demurrage charge to owners of vessels for non-delivery of import and export cargo.

Sixteen vessels now at the mainstream in the harbour area are lying stranded, said port sources.

Transit will benefit both Bangladesh and Nepal, reducing transport cost of Kathmandu's external trade and earning revenues for Dhaka, Commerce Minister Tofael Ahmed told UNB at his Parliament office in city today.

He said the transit route would be opened at Bangladesh, the northern tip of Bangladesh, giving effect to an agreement signed by Bangladesh and Nepal in 1976.

The accord is going to be effective for the first time and "it will add a new chapter to the political history of Bangladesh," the minister said.

There is provision for transit in the agreement of South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement and the transit accord is going to take effect in light of the SAPTA, he said.

Tofael Ahmed and Nepalese Commerce Minister Surabendra Nath Shukla will attend the opening ceremony at Bangladesh border. A representative from India is likely to join the

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Gujral to hold talks with Sharif in NY

NEW DELHI, Aug 30: Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral said today he would meet Pakistan's Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, next month when the two are in New York for the United Nations General Assembly, an Indian news agency reported, says AP.

"I am going to hold talks with the Pakistan Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, in New York," Gujral told reporters in the eastern Indian university town of Shantiniketan.

"Relations are improving. We are hopeful that all our aspirations for improved bilateral relations would be fulfilled," Gujral was quoted as saying by Press Trust of India. The dates for Gujral's New York visit have not yet been announced.

It would be the second meeting between the two leaders since they took office earlier this year.

Khaleda opens FOBANA confce

BNP chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia has urged all Bangladeshis working in the USA to remain united and work for the development of the country, reports UNB.

She was inaugurating a three-day grand conference of the Federation of Bangladesh Associations of North America (FOBANA) in Los Angeles on Friday.

In her brief speech, Begum Zia said she was happy for being invited to inaugurate the conference of Bangladeshis in America.

"I came to the USA carrying the good wishes of the people of Bangladesh," she told the conference at Barbank Airport Hilton and Convention Centre, according to a message received in the city yesterday.

The inaugural session of the conference was also addressed by its convener Dr Zainul Abedin. Mayor of the Barbank city was also present.

The FOBANA conference was being participated by people of all categories, irrespective of their party affiliation.

A total of 1500 registered delegates belonging to more than 40 organisations of America are participating in the conference.

The inaugural session was followed by a cultural function.



The minibus which plunged into the Ichhamati river near Manikganj was salvaged yesterday. Fourteen passengers were killed in the accident on Friday. No other body was found inside the bus. — Star photo

Robber killed in gunfight with police at Lohagara

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 30: A gunfight between police and a gang of highway robbers last night left one person killed and five others injured at Lohagara on Chittagong-Cox's Bazar road.

Police said the dead was identified as an alleged robber.

The injured included two police constables and three alleged robbers.

After an hour-long gunfight, the three wounded robbers were arrested but the others fled away.

The gunfight began at 8 pm when the robbers opened fire on a contingent of police returning to Khagrachhari from Cox's Bazar by a bus.

In response police also fired on the robbers. The gang mistook the bus carrying policemen as a passenger bus and barricaded the road with logs to stop it.

But as the robbers found that the bus was carrying police, they moved to a nearby place and opened fire.

UNB quoting police adds: The robbers were looting a minibus and a truck. At that time, the bus was passing the road with 32 policemen who were sent to Cox's Bazar for a special duty regarding Prime Minister's programme.

The gang fired about 20 shots and police responded firing nine rounds to face the situation.

Later this morning, police found the body of a suspected member of the gang in a roadside forest, where they also got bullets and an LG.

Of the injured gangsters, Selimuddin and Mohammad Zahir of Pukuria village in Bashkhal thana were admitted to Chittagong Medical Col-

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Ershad may ask Monju to quit cabinet post

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Party chief H M Ershad is considering asking JP secretary general and Communications Minister Anwar Hossain Manju to quit his cabinet, according to sources close to the JP high command.

A final decision in this regard may be taken at a Working Committee meeting of the party soon, the sources said.

The party chief will convene the meeting as soon as JP senior vice-chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury returns home from abroad after treatment. The meeting will decide the "future party line," the sources said.

When contacted, Anwar Hossain Manju told The Daily Star last night, "I belong to the party and whatever decision will be there, I will be a party to it."

He further said, "I have been holding these two posts for the last 14 months. If the party can strip me of the two posts now, it could have stripped me of these two posts 14 months ago."

Ershad, who returned home on August 16 after 35 days stay abroad, addressed several public meetings in some northern districts last week where he expressed his desire to turn the JP into a 'real opposition' party.

He also spoke about "withdrawal" of his party's support to the government protesting what he called its anti-people steps including increase in oil prices.

10 missing as two fishing trawlers sink in Bay

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Aug 30: Ten fishermen are missing after two fishing trawlers sank in the Bay of Bengal last night.

According to the owners of the missing trawlers, FB Matleb and FB Nadre, sank in the Bay at Chhatridia, some 60 kilometres south of Patharghata thana of Barguna district with 17 fishermen on board.

Seven fishermen of FB Matleb who were rescued by another trawler said, the trawlers sank in the Bay amid stormy weather and strong current.

But the fate of other 10 fishermen of FB Nadre are yet to be known as they remained untraced till filing of this report tonight.

Downpour causes flood in Rajshahi

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Aug 30: Low-lying areas of the city and vast croplands in the district have been inundated following heavy downpour during the last two days.

Local Met Office recorded 100mm rainfall in the two days.

Most roads and residential areas of the city are now under water. Severely affected areas are Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, Laxminpur, Kazihata, Mirzapur, and Binodpur.

Most of the croplands in Puthia, Durgapur, Tanore, Mochpur and Godagari thanas have been flooded, damaging standing crops.

PLA team in city

An eight-member People's Liberation Army (PLA) delegation from China led by Major General Zhou Shaogun arrived in the city yesterday on a five-day visit to Bangladesh, reports BSS.

They were received at Zia International Airport by senior military officers.