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Lost radioactive isotopes recovered from Magurchhara

By Staff Correspondent

A disaster management team of Occidental on Wednesday last, unearthed from Magurchhara disaster zone the container having 16 radioactive elements that went under soil during the June 15 Magurchhara gas field explosion.

Sources said that the radioactive elements were used for detection of gas and other purposes in gas field exploration. Some of these elements had the potential of 'chains of radioactive sources', thus having the capacity to cause heavy damage to environment in Magurchhara.

The Occidental's team which has been trying to seal the exploded gas well for the last four months, unearthed the container in intact condition while excavating an area.

The sources said that with this recovery, the risk of environmental hazard from radioactive sources has now been

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3 get 10-yr jail term in triple murder case

GAZIPUR, Oct 17: A court here yesterday convicted three people and sentenced them to 10 years in jail in a sensational triple murder case, reports UNB.

Additional District and Sessions Judge AKM Zahir Ahmed delivered the judgement in the crowded court and also fined the accused Tk 5,000 each. In default, to suffer two years more in jail.

The court, however, acquitted 39 other accused of the case, including a local Union Parishad chairman.

The convicts are: Abdul Momen and Sohrab Hossain of village South Dewra and Amir Hossain of Malita village in Polash thana of Narasingdi district.

The case history in brief: On October 21, 1991 a group of armed dacoits looted 12-13 houses at Kapais village in Kaligari thana of Gazipur district, including the house of the then chairman of Jamalpur Union Parishad Rajabuddin.

During the looting, the dacoits killed Sohrab, Sultan and Asiruddin of the village.

A case was filed against 200

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One killed as rival groups clash in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Oct 17: A young man identified as Raju, 22, was killed during a clash between two rival groups at Amanat colony at Nasirabad this evening, police said.

During the clash both the groups exchanged gunfire and blasted cocktails.

But the cause of the clash could not be known immediately, police said.

BNP standing body meets today

An emergency meeting of BNP standing committee will be held at 29 Minto road at 6:30 pm today, reports UNB.

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia will preside over the meeting, said a press release.

The Daily Star

on the Internet

http://www.dailystarnews.com

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by Matir Rahman

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Khaleda invited to discuss 'any issue' in JS Army won't be pulled out of CHT: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday invited the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament to participate in discussions in the House on any issue or ask any question, reports UNB.

She denied the BNP allegation that the Opposition was not allowed to talk inside the House and said, "Come to parliament, take part in the discussions and ask anything you want."

She was addressing the inaugural function of the First Dhaleshwari bridge in the afternoon. The function later turned into a huge public meeting.

The Prime Minister said it is not true that the main Opposition party is not allowed to talk in Parliament. "We have allowed them to discuss whatever issues they wanted to raise."

She mentioned that debates

were held on many important issues, including energy policy, industry, law and order, the Ganges water treaty and foreign policy. "But the Leader of the Opposition did not take part in discussion on any of the issues."

As Leader of the House, Hasina said, "I reply to questions every week." But the Opposition leader did not ask any question, she added.

About the ongoing peace process in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the Prime Minister said that a peace agreement is going to be signed soon to restore peace in the region.

In this regard, she said, the government has no plan to withdraw army from the Hill Tracts region even after the signing of peace accord.

Hasina said the opposition party is trying to hinder the peace process "as they do not want peace and stability, do not

want that citizens of the country return to their homeland."

She said, "We don't want our people, the citizens of a sovereign country, to stay as refugees in other countries."

She wondered how the country's independence and sovereignty will be endangered with peace restored in the CHT, when our citizens will return home.

The opposition party do not want the signing of peace accord, the Prime Minister said, alleging that when the present Leader of the Opposition was in power she spoke in favour of India and now she speaks against India.

"We have earned the independence at the cost of our blood and we'll be the first to give blood, if the need arises again," she said cautioning the people against those who are "trying to jeopardise the peace"

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World Bank chief calls on President, PM

Visiting World Bank President James D Wolfensohn made a courtesy call on President Shahabuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday, reports UNB.

Welcoming Wolfensohn, President lauded the involvement of WB and other organisations like IFC in socio-economic development of the people of Bangladesh, and hoped that the Bank will continue its full cooperation.

Wolfensohn thanked the President for receiving him and his delegation members.

He observed that the foreign aid is dependent on the smooth process of execution of development projects and said he has been impressed seeing the enterprising and hard working people of Bangladesh.

Wolfensohn also called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official residence 'Ganobhaban' yesterday.

He said the World Bank will raise assistance to Bangladesh if the government can enhance aid utilisation and speed up implementation of various devel-

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Crackdown on illegal workers in KSA 10000 Bangladeshis waiting to leave

By M Anwarul Haq and Reaz Ahmed

At least 10,000 Bangladeshis are scrambling to leave Saudi Arabia following expiry of the grace period on October 16 for overseas workers staying without proper documents in the oil-rich kingdom.

The Bangladeshis are now waiting for being airlifted or brought back home by ships. Around 10,000 have already been issued travel documents by the Bangladesh Embassy in Riyadh and the Consulate in Jeddah, said Abdul Momin Chowdhury, Bangladesh Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, over telephone last night.

Of the 10,000 nearly 3,000 are staying in the deportation centres in Jeddah.

These people, it is learnt, have no financial ability to purchase a one-way air ticket to return home. The Saudi government is expected to make arrangements for sending them back by ships. However, sources said no development in this re-

gard took place till yesterday.

The Bangladesh ambassador said that in the last few days, nearly 5,000 Bangladeshis were issued travel documents by the Embassy and almost an equal number by the Consulate.

"It seems most of the overstayers or persons without authorised papers have been issued travel papers or exit passes. Perhaps only a handful of overstayers are here in outlying areas. They are coming in from far flung places to collect their travel documents," ambassador Chowdhury told The Daily Star.

Mobile teams were also sent out to far flung places to enable unauthorised stayers to avail of travel documents, he added.

Asked if the overstayers would face further harassment like forced deportation, he replied, "It should not be the case." He, however, said that there was no follow-up action

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Japan ready to help organise int'l confce for Ganges Barrage

Japan has expressed its readiness to support Bangladesh in organising an international conference in the city early next year to galvanize assistance for the construction of Ganges Barrage Project, reports BSS.

Japan would extend all possible assistance for holding the conference, Japanese Parliamentary Vice Minister Takeo Kawamura told Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak during their meeting in Tokyo on Thursday.

Kawamura said in view of the magnitude and size of the project, support of other donors and agencies would be needed.

Razzak thanked the minister and the Japanese government for their follow-up action for the implementation of Ganges Barrage Project, said a message received from Tokyo yesterday.

Earlier, Razzak gave a detailed briefing on the importance of the Ganges Barrage Project for the economic devel-

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Interpol confce for universal extradition treaty

NEW DELHI, Oct 17: India today clinched two major victories in the ongoing Interpol Conference when members unanimously endorsed the need for a universal extradition treaty and for according legal status to red-alert notices for nabbing fugitive criminals, reports PTI.

The conference decided to urge the United Nations to adopt a universal extradition convention and asked individual governments to accord legal status to re-alert notices.

The decision of the world police body, on the third day of the week-long annual general assembly here, comes in the wake of a strong appeal by Prime Minister I K Gujral for adoption of such a universal treaty to end 'agonising negotiations' for extradition of most sought-after criminals.

Fall in water level

Ferry service between Fulchhari, Bahadurabad may be stopped

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, Oct 17: Ferry service between Fulchhari and Bahadurabad ghats may be stopped any moment due to fall in water level in the Brahmaputra, disrupting the East-West rail link.

The marine department at Testamuk Ghat on October 13 declared the Fulchhari-Bahadurabad route via Prozapotti channel abandoned as the depth of water there did not allow movement of ferries.

The Railway, since then, is using the Kalasana channel. But they say this route will be stopped within next few days if

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Five killed in road accidents

By Staff Correspondent

Five people were killed and seven other injured in separate road accidents in the city and Savar yesterday and the day before.

Two young men were killed in a road accident at Banani in the city Thursday night.

Gulshan police identified the dead as Shahrukh Jalal, 22, son of Brigadier Shahjalal, and Moniruzzaman Mia, 21, son of Lutfor Rahman.

Both were fatally injured when their car hit a roadside tree on Road No 27 in Banani at about 11:30 pm.

Doctors declared them dead when the two were rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Police said Shahrukh, a stu-

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50 BNP, JCD activists sued in Patuakhali

From Staff Correspondent

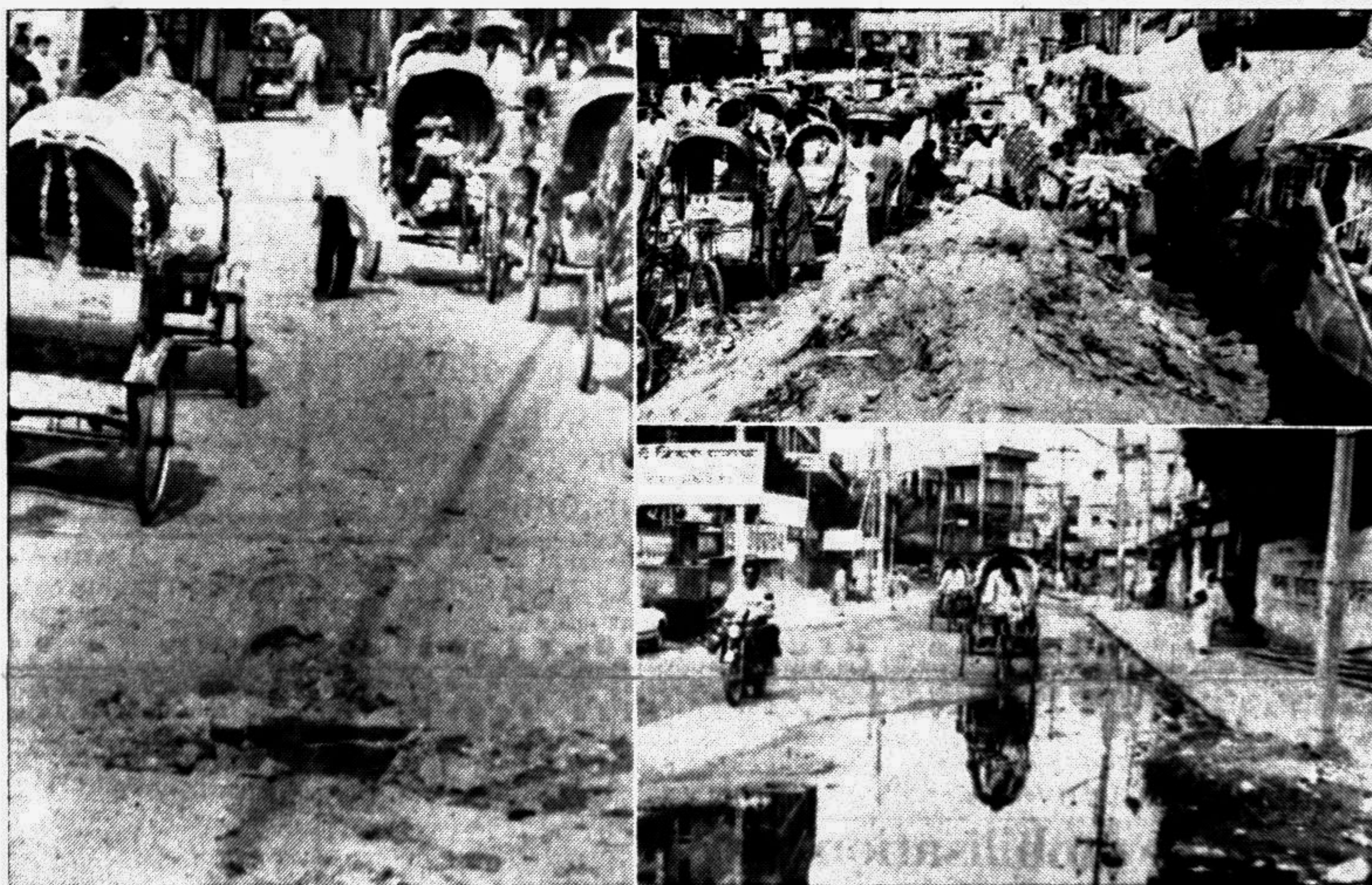
BARISAL, Oct 17: Patuakhali district administration has lodged a case against 50 BNP and JCD leaders and workers for damaging government property in the Patuakhali Circuit House.

During a clash between two factions of JCD over the declaration of its district committee, the activists caused a widespread damage to the government property in the Circuit House on Wednesday.

Police also arrested four JCD activists - Manju Mirza, Madhab Sahen, Manju Mia and Manir Hossain.

Meantime, former Air Chief and central BNP leader Altaf Hossain Chowdhury left Patuakhali yesterday amid police protection.

A tense situation is prevailing in the district.



THE CITY ROADS NEED CARE: Clockwise from left: An open sewer waiting for its next 'eruption' at Faridabad. Garbage piled up near Gawsia Market at Elephant Road. Effluents from an open sewer flood part of the Elephant Road near the Bata Crossing. —Star photo by Amran Hossain

Evasion of duties thru' forged documents Ctg customs reviewing files of imported vehicles

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Oct 17: Customs authorities here started to review the files of the vehicles imported during the past one year to detect the cases of evasion of duties, highly-placed official sources said.

Such a step to review the documents of imported vehicles was taken recently against the backdrop of reported forgery by a section of unscrupulous importers.

A senior official of Chittagong Customs House said, "There must be a serious action against the cases of evasion of duties, if detected, in the review to be completed shortly."

He said a two-member team from the National Board of Revenue (NBR) had visited Chittagong Customs House last week to probe the allegations of forgery in importing vehicles from abroad.

The sources said vehicles used for more than five years and latest model cars certified as 'old vehicles' were being imported by a section of importers

in violation of the rules.

Such types of imported vehicles are being cleared from Chittagong port sheds by placing some doctored papers in league with the C&F agents. Customs and port sources said.

As a result, the national exchequer is being deprived of huge amount of duties while the buyers of vehicles, mainly re-

conditioned, are being cheated, the sources said.

According to the sources, in the papers of imported reconditioned vehicles, the model codes are changed by the unscrupulous importers to evade duties.

Citing instances, they said, the original model code of a car AE100 is changed from AEMNK to AEHBK.

The duties against AE100 with original model code AEMNK stands at Tk 1,61,500 while after changing it to AEHBK the duties come down to Tk 1,30,000.

Similarly, in case of a microbus, the duties against YR 21 with original model code PQZE stands at Tk 1,81,000, but changing it to MDSE in doctored papers the duties come down to Tk 1,30,000, the sources pointed out.

In addition, the registration cancellation certificate (RCC) of the reconditioned vehicles, required to be obtained from the respective exporting countries,

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Alleged snatcher beaten to death

By Staff Correspondent

A group of people beat a young man to death suspecting him to be a snatcher at Kalabagan under Dhanmondi thana in the city early yesterday.

The dead was identified as Mizanur Rahman, 26, a resident of Mirpur area.

More than 20 people caught Mizan from near Lal Fakir Mazar in Kalabagan at about 1 am and beat him up.

Quoting the FIR, police said Mizanur was attacked by the mob as he and three others allegedly snatched Tk 9,000 from Anwar Hossain, an official of Kalabagan Krira Chakra (KCC), at about 12:30 am.

A gang of four armed men intercepted Anwar and his brother Jaman near Dream Laundry on Lake Circus road while they were returning home. The muggers snatched the money and fled the scene.

Later some local people started searching for the muggers and caught Mizan.

Mizan sustained fatal injuries when the mob beat him. Dhanmondi police rescued him and sent him to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he died a couple of hours later.

Police said they seized pistol from Mizan, son of Abdul Huq. The body has been sent to morgue for autopsy.

CEC on electoral reforms Very little support from political parties

By Staff Correspondent

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Mohammad Abu Hena said yesterday that the Election Commission got "very little support" from political parties for bringing about electoral reforms.

An Electoral Reforms Committee, formed by the Election Commission a few months back had invited suggestions from political parties, eminent persons, civic and non-government organizations but there

was "little response" from political parties, he said.

"We, in the Election Commission, feel that the issue of electoral reforms so far did not receive the attention it deserves in political and intellectual debate," the CEC said while addressing as chief guest the closing session of a two-day international workshop on Electoral Law Reform, held at a city hotel.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed had inaugurated the workshop on Thursday. It was organised by the Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA) in collaboration with the Study and Research Group of Manabik Shahajaya Sangstha (MSS), an NGO.

"I believe, all of you will agree with me that the political parties, as representatives of people, are important stakeholders in introducing amendments to, and formulation of laws," said Abu Hena.

"So, we eagerly look forward to receiving recommendations from them for bringing about electoral reforms which, they

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3 bodies recovered from roof of express train

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Oct 17: Railway police recovered the bodies of three passengers from the roof of a train 'Faharika Express' at Chittagong rail station this afternoon.

Police said the train had reached at 3:30 pm today from Srimongal. But how the three unidentified passengers died on the roof, was yet to be known, police said.

Hanufa's long ordeal ends on a happy note

By Morshed Ali Khan

Torture of a maid in Brussels

The fifteen-year-old Bangladeshi girl who was rescued by a Belgian doctor from the residence of a Bangladeshi diplomat in a comatose condition in Brussels in 1984, returned here to find her parents 16 years after she was taken abroad to work as a maid.

Daughter of a rickshaw-puller in Dhaka, Hanufa Quadir is now a Belgian national. She did not know for the last 16 years that her parents were alive.

Hanufa and her Pakistani-born husband Zahiruddin Babor flew to Dhaka from Brussels early last month. After a week-long search in different districts, she traced her father Kader and mother Rokeya Begum, living in a makeshift

house in the city's Jagannathpur area under Cantonment thana.

In these long 16 years since she was first taken to Dubai as a maid in the house of one Azizul Haque Chowdhury in 1981, the size of her family has risen from four members to eight.

Sitting at her Dhaka Sheraton hotel room last month, Hanufa, now about 28, narrated her story. In 1981, her parents lived in a basti behind the Holy Family Hospital. Her mother, a part-time maid at a diplomat's house nearby, arranged for young Hanufa to work in Azizul Haque Chowdhury's house. After a few days Azizul was posted to Dubai as a Counselor in Bangladesh mission. Azizul

proposed to Kader that he could take his daughter to Dubai for three years where she would stay with the four-member family and help with household chore. Poor rickshawpuller Kader and Rokeya agreed on condition that their daughter will be returned after three years.

"During the first six months in Dubai, I was treated well by the family but later the torture started. I was locked up in a room, tied with telephone wire then beaten up mercilessly, day after day. They told me I looked too ugly."

She alleged that both Azizul and his wife used kitchen knives to scar her body. They burnt her with lighted cigarettes. She was neither given adequate food nor was she allowed to see anyone in the

world for months together. At one point Hanufa escaped from Azizul's house and sheltered herself under a car where she lay unconscious for several days, she said.

Dubai police picked her up from underneath the car and took her to a hospital. "I had even forgotten Bangla and could not open my mouth due to malnourishment and fatigue," she said. Within a day, someone from the embassy came to pick her up and placed under Azizul's authority again.

"Now the torture intensified. I had no shower for months and spent the days in a room without almost no food at all. At times both would come and beat me up with forks, knives using electric cords to tie me."

In 1984, Azizul was trans-

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Hanufa (left) with her sister when she came to Dhaka recently. —Star photo