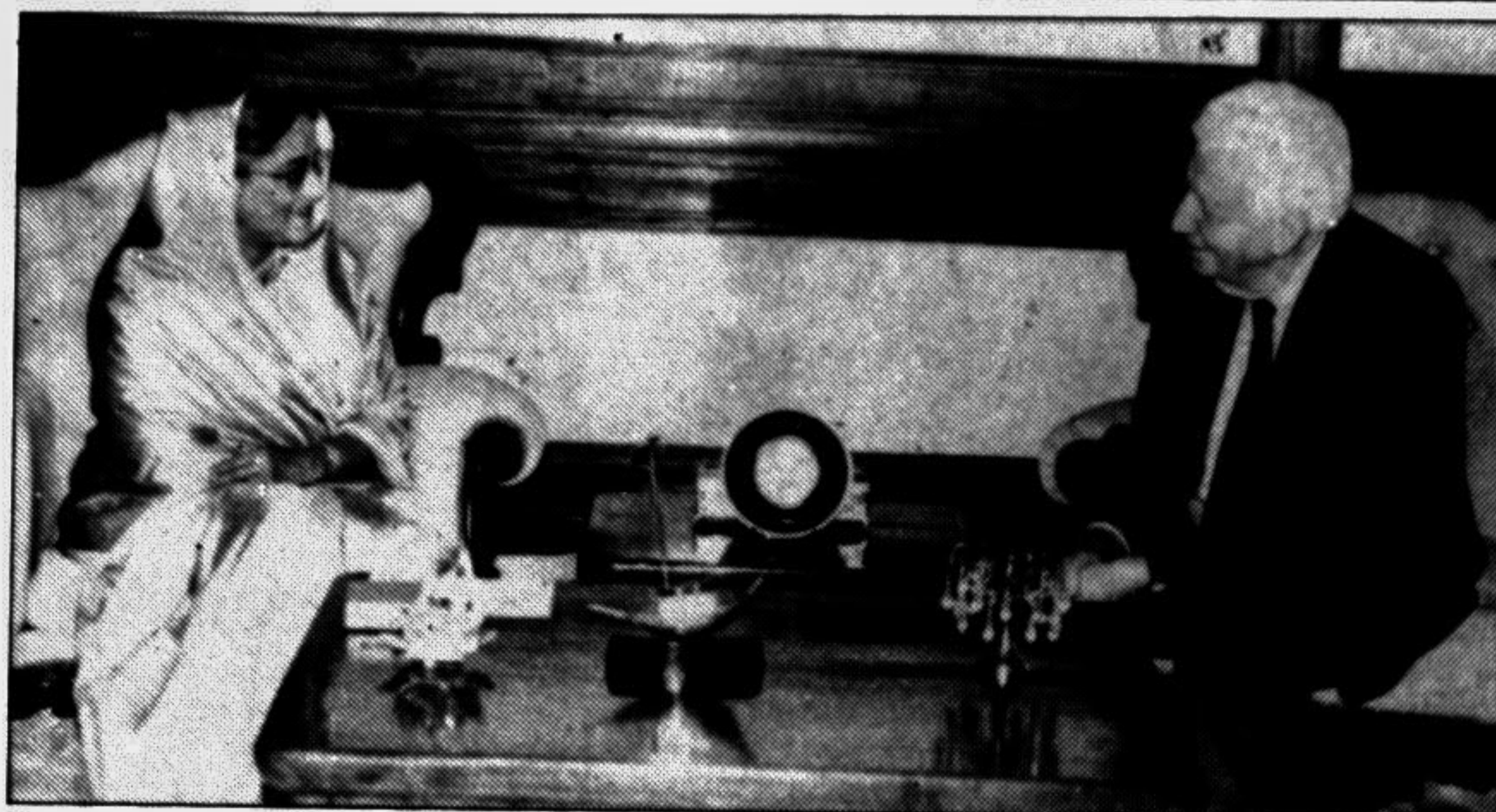


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French Senator Xavier de Villevin called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office in the city yesterday. — PID photo

'Bill on offences against women, children politically motivated'

By Staff Correspondent

Human rights activists at a discussion on the Offences against Women, Children and Terrorism (Special Provisions) Bill, 1997 have said provisions in the proposed bill are self-contradictory and politically motivated.

It is nothing more than the previous government's Anti-Terrorism Act, 1992, they observed.

The discussion was organised in the city recently by Aino-Salish Kendra, an NGO. Human rights activists from the Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association, Bangladesh Society for Enforcement of Human Rights, Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust, Gano Shahajia Shangkatha and the Odhakar participated in the discussion. The speakers included Advocate Zahurul Islam, Barrister Tania Amir and Dr Naila Khan.

The speakers expressed concern at the government's failure to inform the people about the contents of the Bill.

They urged the government to hold public debates and consultations with human rights activists on any proposed law which is likely to have an impact on fundamental rights of citizens.

They also demanded removal of certain provisions from the bill relating to terrorism.

We do not support enactment of this bill.

Star Correspondent at JU assaulted

By Staff Correspondent

Jahangirnagar University (JU) correspondent of The Daily Star was assaulted by a group of student activists of a major political party on the campus yesterday.

Govinda Bar was attacked by the group of four when he was returning to his hostel room at about 2 pm.

It was alleged that the student activists attacked the Star correspondent as they were dissatisfied at a news item published about a year ago.

The JU units of Bangladesh Students' Union, Human Rights Journalists' Forum and JU Journalists' Association protested the incident and demanded punishment to the persons involved in the attack.

Govt step ill-advised

From Page 1

defeating way of containing inflation," said a leading entrepreneur in the leather sector.

Instead of checking this trend, decision was taken to increase the cost of funds for productive sectors. This, in all likelihood, will backfire on the economy, the MCCI functionary said.

Increase in bank rate is not even justified for deposit mobilisation. Deposits with banks, particularly time deposits, which are influenced by interest rate have already increased by Tk 79 cr during July-September this year.

"The whole situation shows, with all respect to policymakers, very adhoc and disjointed approach to tackle the economic issues, the MCCI says.

In fact, the timing of the monetary restriction is not appropriate in view of the fact that external demand for Bangladesh products is providing the basis for increased activities in the industrial sector.

It may be mentioned that even for the readymade garment sector, the next quarter may be quite difficult as the registration of back-to-back letters of credit during the July-September 1997 declined by two per cent.

"On one hand, the government is borrowing from the banks to meet the loss in state owned enterprises, and its own increasing establishment cost, as revealed by figures given by the central bank. On the other hand, it is restricting funds for the private sector. This is a self-

ment of special laws on violence against women and children as these only result in piecemeal changes and have further impact on the right to fair trial," one speaker said.

They urged the government to review the general laws such as the Penal Code and Dowry Prohibition Act to ensure the rights of women and children and their protection against violence.

DU to confer

From Page 1

habuddin Ahmed, the Education Minister and the Chairman of Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO.

He will call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, and meet newspaper editors and intellectuals tomorrow.

The University of Dhaka will confer honorary degree of Doctor of Science (D Sc) *honoris causa* on Prof Dr Federico Mayor today.

The Vice Chancellor of the university Prof A K Azad Chowdhury disclosed this at a press briefing at his residence Sunday.

The VC will confer the degree on behalf of the Chancellor of the University and President of Bangladesh Shahabuddin Ahmed at a special convocation to be held at 4.30 pm on the day at the TSC auditorium.

The VC said that the degree will be conferred on Federico Mayor for his excellent academic performances in the field of science and his works for the cause of humanity and cultural developments.

Born in Barcelona, Spain on January 27, Mayor was educated at the University of Madrid where he obtained doctorate in Pharmacy in 1958.

He devoted the first part of his career to teaching and research, with special emphasis on prenatal biochemistry and detection and treatment of children suffering from congenital defects.

In 1967, Mayor launched the "National Plan for the Prevention of Mental Retardation" aimed at reducing mental handicaps in Spanish children.

A year later, he was named Rector of the University of Grenada.

French Senator calls on PM

The visiting French Senator Xavier de Villevin called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

Chairman of the Senate Permanent Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Armed Forces, Villevin referred to the existing good relations between Bangladesh and France, and hoped that the economic cooperation would continue to strengthen.

He also praised the leadership of Sheikh Hasina for her endeavour for the development of Bangladesh.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina told the Senator that the existing bilateral relations between the two countries are very excellent in all spheres.

Earlier, the French Senator also called on Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad at his office in the afternoon.

Senator De Villevin is now in the capital to attend the first ever 'French week and trade show' which was inaugurated on Sunday by President Shahabuddin Ahmed.

PM to visit quake victims in Ctg today

CHITTAGONG, Nov 24: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will visit the port city of Chittagong tomorrow to see the Friday's earthquake victims, reports UNB.

The Prime Minister will go to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where the injured are undergoing treatment.

She will also visit the spot at Hamjarbagh in Panchlaish thana where a five-storey building collapsed after the tremor shook the district on Friday afternoon.

The Prime Minister is scheduled to return to the capital in the afternoon.

Holzman meets Khaleda

US Ambassador to Bangladesh John C Holzman met BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia at her Minto Road official residence yesterday, reports UNB.

They discussed matters relating to bilateral interests.

Party leader M Morshed Khan MP and MM Rezaul Karim were present during the meeting, said a press release.

Pallas' Eagle

From Page 1

ing there, they estimated.

Unless authorities move fast, nothing is going to stop the expanding claws of a local tough, who has been given lease of the wetlands.

"It is home to a number of species of vegetation, fish and birds, including migratory birds from the cold climates", Anisuzzaman Khan, Executive Director of Nature Conservation Movement (NACOM) and an expert on wetland birds, told The Daily Star.

He accompanied a team of experts and conservationists which visited the area between November 10 and 13. The team included Anwarul Islam head of the Bangladesh chapter of IUCN, Manzurul Hannan Khan, an official of the Ministry of Forests and Environment, SMA Rezaul Karim, Dr Golam Mostafa and Ms Nargis Joarder. They surveyed the latest status of the majestic bird.

They said the lessee claims that since he has taken the wetland, he has staked his claim on the forests on its bank.

The lake has been leased to him for fishing but not for wiping out the trees on its banks, said Wing Commander (ret'd) Enam ul Haque an eminent bird watcher who was the first Bangladeshi to travel to Antarctica on an expedition.

He also visits the area regularly and pleaded for urgent intervention by the authorities. He said he recently visited Rangchi village and saw the eagles nesting. If the forest is cleared, it would deprive them of nests for breeding and eliminate the eagles from Bangladesh.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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EPB to formulate guidelines for issuing GSP certificates

The Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) has been asked to formulate the guidelines for issuing export certificates for readymade garments under the one and two stage transformations of the GSP, reports UNB.

The directive was given from a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Commerce and Industries, in the city yesterday with committee chairman and Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed in the chair.

The meeting stressed the need for utilising the opportunities created from the relaxation of the rules of origin clause of the Generalised System of Preference (GSP) by the European Commission.

The meeting decided that the EPB would formulate the guidelines on the issuance of export certificates in consultation with the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA).

The EPB will issue the export certificates as early as possible. Besides, the previous provision of issuing certificates under the three-stage transformation system will remain effective.

The meeting hoped that the steps would result in substantial increase in the exports of readymade garments and knitwear to the European Union countries, the largest market for Bangladesh.

It also called upon the BGMEA and the BKMEA to provide necessary advice in order to ensure maximum utilisation of the opportunities given by the EC.

The meeting also elaborately discussed various problems relating to expansion of trade and investment, and their possible remedies.

Tofael Ahmed told the meeting that the government is committed to remove the impediments on the way to expanding trade and industry as it attaches top priority to trade and investment.

The government was extending all kinds of supports to the private sector, he said, adding that all concerned should work together for increasing the export earnings of the country.

Privatisation Board Chairman Kazi Zafarullah, Bangladesh Finished Leather and Leather Goods Exporters Association President AKM Rahmatullah MP, Commerce Secretary Syed Alamgir Farook Chowdhury, Industries Secretary KM Izzat Haq, National Board of Revenue Chairman Shah Abdul Hannan, MCCI President Samson H Chowdhury, DCCI President ASM Quasem, BCI President Sharif Afzal Hossain, Bankers' Association President Abdul Awal Minto, BTMA President M Shahjahan, BKMEA President Monzurul Haque, BGMEA President Mostafa Golam Qudus and representatives of FBCCI, Bangladesh Bank and concerned ministries and departments attended the meeting.

Boy rescued, one arrested

Police arrested an alleged child lifter from the city's Agargaon area and rescued a two-year-old boy from Karapur village in Barisal on Sunday.

The boy identified as Rubel was kidnapped from Churnarughat thana in Habiganj on November 12, police said.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police handed over Rubel, son of Ahad Ali, and the arrested man, Omar Faruk, 22, to Habiganj police yesterday.

The motive behind the alleged kidnapping could not be known immediately. Ahad and Faruk both worked as masons in Sylhet.

Ahmad told police that he had a quarrel with Faruk a couple of days before his son was kidnapped from their house in Hatunda village under Churnarughat thana.

But, Ahad and Habiganj police could not trace Rubel in Sylhet and its adjoining areas. Later, Ahad filed a case with Churnarughat thana on November 21 apprehending that his son was either killed or held hostage somewhere in Dhaka.

He informed the incident to the Detective Branch of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police. A DB team then started raiding different parts of the city and arrested Faruk from the roof of an under-construction building in Agargaon.

Following the confession of the arrested man, the DB police rescued Rubel from the house of Abdul Mannan, a relative of Faruk, in Barisal.

Foreign ship seized at Mongla

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Nov 24: Mongla police seized a foreign ship on Sunday night as it was leaving the port with 6930 metric tons of urea fertiliser without handing it over to the importer concerned.

The vessel MV Alkatros-3 anchored at the port on November 6. Captain of the ship has also been asked not to leave the port without permission.

Ershad doubts two leaders' belief in democracy

By Staff Correspondent

Former President H M Ershad has questioned the country's two top political leaders' belief in democracy.

"We always talk about dialogue but we cannot sit together in the Jatiya Sangsad for the purpose... But we can meet at the cantonment... Do we really believe in the ideals of democracy?" he commented during a press conference at the Jatiya Party office at Baridhara in the city yesterday.

He was referring to the brief exchange of words between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Leader of the Opposition in Jatiya Sangsad Begum Khaleda Zia at a function at the Sena Kana on the Armed Forces Day on Friday. Ershad was also present at the function.

"I stood in respect to the Prime Minister and exchanged pleasantries with her. But the Opposition leader didn't bother for the customary behaviour to a Prime Minister. I also didn't find them talking to each other cordially... they exchanged only a few words."

CHT accord unlikely

From Page 1

of a memorandum of understanding as new complications have arisen following the demands made by PCJSS hardliners and aired by people close to them.

Shantu Larma has joined his senior colleagues and the top brass of the military wing of PCJSS, Sh:ti Bahini, at Dudukchhara, a tiny frontier hamlet in Khagrachhari. His team is likely to be flown to the city by a military helicopter tomorrow morning.

About 25 sq km area around Dudukchhara had been demilitarised and the border guard posts neutralised on November 11 to facilitate arrival of the PCJSS top brass to their headquarters in Bishnupur, southern Tripura, across the border, ahead of the earlier scheduled meeting on November 16.

But, the meeting was deferred when Shantu Larma informed the NCCHT that he had fallen ill. He sent a communique requesting that the meeting be shifted to November 27. But the

NCCHT proposed it to be on November 26, which was agreed by PCJSS.

The PCJSS leaders already camping at Dudukchhara had sent feelers through the tribesmen and local correspondents that they would not sign an agreement unless they receive the draft of it which was promised to them by NCCHT by October 31.

They also stated that they want amendments to the provisions on power and authority of a proposed Regional Council to oversee the administration, police and land management.

They are also pressing for enrolment of their armed cadres in security forces including police, after resettlement of the settlers elsewhere from tribal lands.

Earlier, Minal Chakma, leader of Humanities Protection Forum, who is believed to be close to PCJSS and based in Tripura's capital Agartala, in an interview with BBC appealed to prime ministers of India and Bangladesh to see that the PCJSS demands were accepted.

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Khaleda addresses public meet at Bagerhat today

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Nov 24: BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia is scheduled to address a public meeting at Bagerhat at Khanjahan Ali College maidan tomorrow afternoon.

Meanwhile, Awami League, BCL and Juba League have jointly announced a dawn-to-dusk road barricade programme here tomorrow in protest against the killing of B L College unit BCL leader Manunur Rashid Lipon and in demand for arrest of the killers.

Begum Zia's scheduled passing through the city on way to Bagerhat and the ruling party's barricade programme have fuelled tension in the city.

On way to Bagerhat via Khulna, Begum Zia is likely to address street rallies at Phulata, Phulbari gate, Dakbunga-low square and Rupsha ferry ghat in the city.

The ruling party has also taken up similar programmes at the same places.

871 more tribals return home

KHAGRACHHARI, Nov 24: A total of 871 tribal refugees of 148 families came back home from the Indian state of Tripura today, the fourth day of the fourth phase of repatriation, reports UNB.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Nurunnabi Chowdhury received the tribesmen at Tablighari transit point in Matiranga thana of the district at 9 am.

Ten tribals of two families, who were scheduled to come back, did not turn up due to illness, officials said.

BNP: UP polls

From Page 1

tempt by the ruling party to rig the polls or manipulate the results, meeting sources said.

Party chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia presided over the meeting, held at her Minto Road official residence.

It also expressed concern at what it called deteriorating law and order centring the UP polls and blamed ruling party-backed 'terrorists' for this.

Standing Committee members Prof Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury, M Saifur Rahman, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Khadakar Delwar Hossain, Khadakar Mosharrar Hossain, Abdus Salam Talukdar, Choudhury Tanvir Ahmed Siddiqi, RA Ghani, Rafiqul Islam Mia, Abdul Matin Choudhury and Khadakar Mahbub Hossain attended the meeting.

PM's directive

Rafiqul Islam briefed the Prime Minister in detail about the overall situation in Hamjarbagh area rocked by the tremor on Friday afternoon.

The Prime Minister also asked the authorities to be equipped with rescue operation materials to face the disaster like earthquake and take disaster preparedness programme with more caution.

Hasina also directed the Public Works Ministry to give a report on whether the building that collapsed had due approval for construction.

She also instructed the Health Minister to set up an intensive care unit (ICU) at Chittagong Medical College Hospital immediately.

Later, the Prime Minister at a separate meeting at the Secretariat office reviewed the projects under the Ministries of Commerce and Industries, Environment and Forest, Law, Information and Planning, and asked all concerned to gear up the works for timely implementation of the projects.

Gulshan lake

From Page 1

Ahmed, issued the rule upon the Housing and Public Works Secretary, Chairman of RAJUK, Director General of Department of Environment, and Indus Valley Investments Private Limited.

The rule, issued yesterday on a writ petition filed by Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA), has been made returnable within eight weeks.

The court has also called for records relating to the agreement from the respondents.

The petition challenging the 'Banani-Gulshan-Baridhara Lake Development Project Agreement' was filed by Mirza Hossain Haider on behalf of BELA and was moved by Dr Kamal Hossain, senior advocate, Supreme Court.

It questioned the authority of RAJUK in leasing out a total area of 220 acres of public land of the Banani, Gulshan and Baridhara Lake area to the Indus Valley Pvt Ltd for undertaking huge construction in the said area defying and violating the legal and constitutional requirements.

Dr Kamal Hossain was assisted by Advocates Mirza Hossain Haider, Bahreen Khan and Iqbal Kabir, said a press release.

Garments worker raped in city: 5 arrested

By Staff Correspondent

A teenage garments factory worker was allegedly gang-raped by a group of five young men in a house at R K Mission Road in a city's Motijheel area Sunday night.

Police arrested all the gang members, aged between 18 and 20, yesterday morning on charges of raping the 18-year-old girl.

The arrested men allegedly raped the girl throughout the night from about 9:30 pm Sunday. They released her early morning yesterday, police said.

Motijheel police identified the accused five as Swapan, Ibrahim, Babul, Abul Hasan and Ariful.

The gang attacked the girl when she was returning to her South Muktapara house from the garments factory in Motijheel area. The attackers took her to a tin-shed house at R K Mission Road at about 9:30 pm.

The young girl who hails from Shariatpur went to her house at about 6 am yesterday. Later, she along with her sister,

came to Motijheel thana and informed police about the incident.

Motijheel police immediately raided the house at R K Mission Road and arrested the five men.

The garments worker filed a case with Motijheel thana under the Women and Children Repression Act of 1995. Meanwhile, police sent the girl to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital for medical examination.

Two escape from Mirpur thana: SI closed

By Staff Correspondent

Two arrested persons escaped from Mirpur thana in the city Sunday afternoon.

A police sub-inspector, Faruk Hossain, was closed following the incident, police said yesterday, adding that the SI had arrested the two from the Kalyanpur area.

Baten, 24, and Faruk, 25, managed to escape from the thana after they were taken there at about 6 pm. They were arrested from Kalyanpur bazaar area on charges of extortion.

Mirpur police, however, could not give details about how the two escaped from the thana compound.

A senior police official said they were yet to confirm whether the arrested men fled away or escaped with the help of policemen in the thana.

12 telephone sets recovered at ZIA

The Customs surveillance team at Zia International Airport recovered 12 mobile telephone sets from the transit lounge of the airport last night, reports UNB.

Officials said the Customs men recovered the abandoned telephone sets worth about Tk 2.5 lakh from the lounge at about 11.30 pm.

Transport strike

From Page 1

demanded dissolution of the newly-formed Truck Sramik Union of Rajshahi.

Leaders of the Motor Sramik Union of Rajshahi, Chappainawabganj, Naogaon, Natore, Joypurhat and Pabna jointly declared the strike in a press conference this afternoon at the Rajshahi Motor Sramik Union office. The conference was addressed by Mahbub Alam, Mozammel Hoque, Kamal Hossain and Rafiqul Islam.

Ershad

From Page 1

he said late President Ziaur Rahman's policy of settling non-tribals in the hilly areas proved to be wrong. "As the chief of army staff then, I had nothing to do with the move... We had to carry out the government's order to fight against the Shantibahinimen. I had no scope to disobey the President," he said.

The JP chairman said he does not feel the need for keeping the temporary army camps in the troubled points in the CHT once peace is restored, but suggested that the cantonments must remain there.

For a lasting solution to the CHT problem, he proposed that the Shantibahini members surrender arms to the President or the Prime Minister through a formal announcement and the government must rehabilitate them properly.

Additional secretary general of the party Nazim Rahman Manju and central leader Sardar Amjad Hossain assisted the party chief in the news conference.

Gujral

From Page 1

1996 elections, would now have to topple the government or face the humiliation of backing down.

New general elections would give India its fifth government within two years. India's president, however, could also call for the formation of a new coalition.

Congress, expected to table a motion of no-confidence today, instead chose to force an adjournment, its members causing pandemonium and making all debate impossible by chanting 'Expel the DMK, save the country' and 'Long live Rajiv Gandhi'.

Their action, interpreted as a delaying tactic, was later defended by the party. A spokesman said it could not withdraw support as it had not received an official reply from Gujral on their ultimatum for the DMK's ouster.

Speaker Purno Sangma suspended the House until further notice, arguing it had been overtaken by 'mindless mockery' following similar adjournments on Thursday and Friday.