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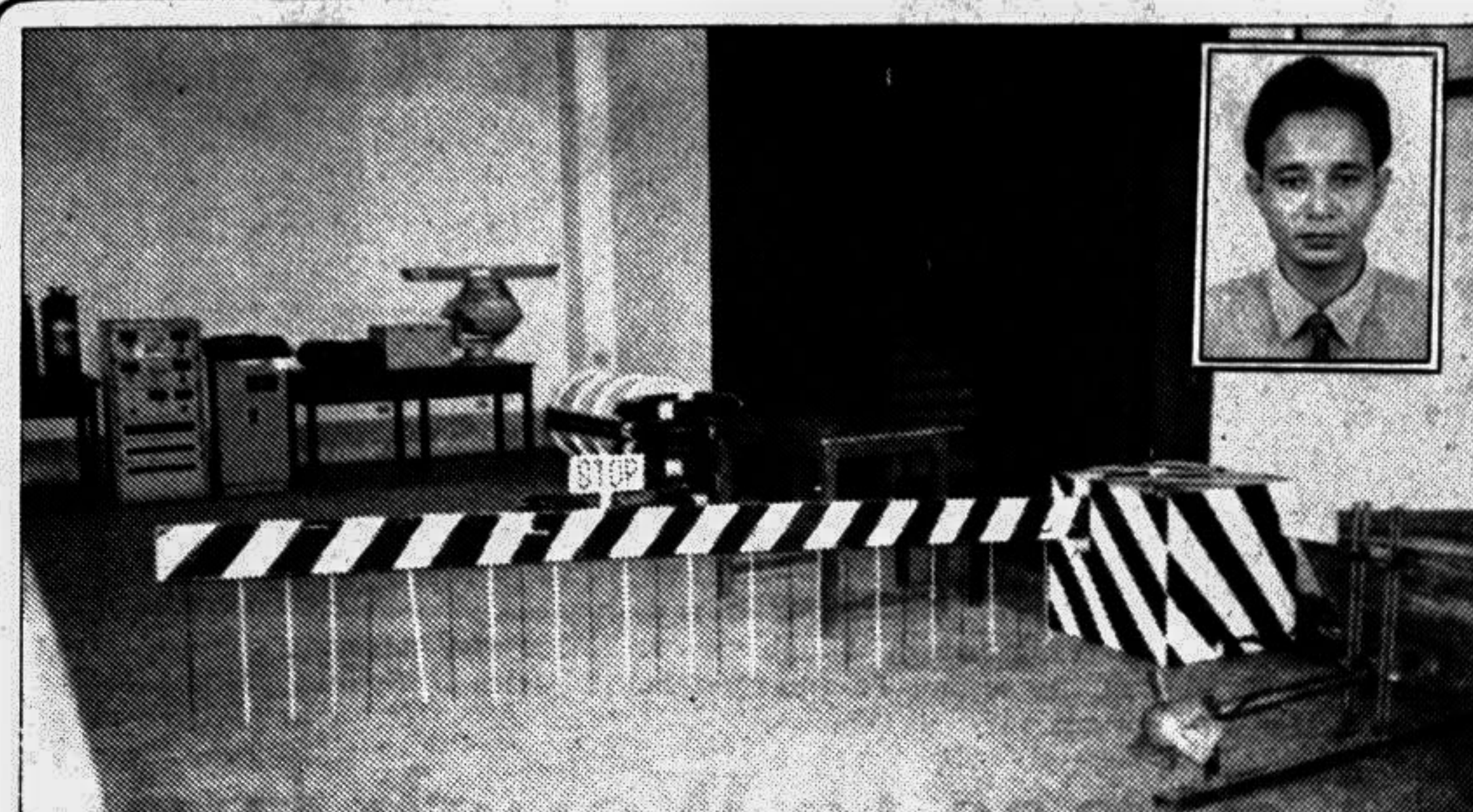
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Let's make things better

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The electronic gate barrier and KM Ali Reza Helal (inset).

— Star photo

Budding scientists need more attention, real support

By Reaz Ahmad

More incentives and patronisation can open up avenues for budding scientists to develop home-made technology that can save huge foreign exchange now being spent for import of scientific equipment.

It has been a couple of years now that the National Museum of Science and Technology took up a project to give facilities and incentives to budding scientists. Each year, it provides some 20 to 25 young scientists with workshop facility and raw materials for three months to complete their scientific projects.

However, young scientists feel that giving one's mind to science and technological research is a matter of continuous process and require more support. Talking to The Daily Star, KM Ali Reza Helal, a young scientist, said, "Once we complete the project work, there is an expedition of the scientific plant. But, then we can not proceed further in developing our projects."

jects due to fund constraint".

Prof Ali Azgar, a physics teacher in the BUET and a member of the committee that recently prepared the national education policy, agreed to it. "In a broader spectrum, we lack a science culture in our society",

Mostafizur Rahman, curator of the Science Museum said under the project, budding scientists are given a monthly remuneration of Tk 2,000 each in addition to workshop facility and raw material during the three-month period. "But, it is true that after successful completion of their science projects, few can avail scholarships under the ministry for further research".

Young scientist Helal built an electronic auto-power gate barrier at the Science Museum's workshop at a cost of Taka 50,000 only. He regretted that if he could develop his project further, might be the government would not have to procure such gates from India for level crossings in Dhaka.

Helal claimed that the gate barrier that he invented was of better quality, and could be used as level crossing gate, office security gate, and at airport, ferry ghats and exclusive industrial zones. His project guide, Dr Maglab Al Nur, an Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering of BUET, was full of praise for his invention. The gate barrier has auto-lock system, manual drive lever and low electricity charge.

"We urge the government to raise the budget for the science and technology sector, setting up of a permanent sales and exhibition centre and more publicity," said Helal.

Prof Ali Azgar suggested that young scientists should unite and form a 'Society of Innovators', banks and financial institutions should provide loans to them, elder scientists should extend their helping hand and a science culture should be developed in the society.

BCL celebrates golden jubilee today

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student wing of the ruling Awami League, will celebrate its golden jubilee today with day-long programmes, reports BSS.

Since its inception on January 4, 1948, the Chhatra League has been playing key role in all democratic movements. In organising the Liberation War under the leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, it played a pioneer role.

Chhatra League also played a vital role in flourishing the 'Bengali nationalism' and forming people's opinions in support of it.

To mark its 50th anniversary, the Chhatra League has drawn up elaborate programmes which include placing of wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at zero hour, hoisting of national and party flags at the party central office at 7 am and discussion and reunion at the Ramna Batamul at 10 am.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to attend the function as the chief guest.

Outlaws kill ex-UP member in Meherpur

MEHERPUR, Jan 3: An elderly former union parishad member was gunned down by an outlawed group at village Mahajanpur in Sadar thana of the district on Friday night, reports UNB.

Police said the armed members of Ruhul Bahini of the outlawed Purbia Banglar Communist Party shot and killed Omar Ali, 65, at about 10:00 pm.

They said the gang of about 25 outlaws also snatched two licensed guns from the village.

The group earlier picked up five members of their rival Workers Party-backed Bablu group, including victim Omar Ali, from Mahajanpur, accusing them of collecting tolls for Bablu.

Four others — Nazimuddin Mandal, Reaz, Rafiq and Bari — were released when local people and police chased the terrorists. Both Ruhul and Bablu, accused in arms case, are now in jail. Bablu contested the recent election from jail and was elected chairman of Mahajanpur union parishad.

9 BCL activists signed by the office secretary of the BCL central committee Rafiqul Islam yesterday.

Jasimuddin Manik, a BCL leader of the university unit has been appointed acting general secretary, the press release added.

A murder case was lodged with Savar thana against them following the killing in October last year.

Clarification

In a clarification on the news item headlined "Negotiations likely to resume next week" published on Friday in The Daily Star, oil company Tullow pointed out that it did not invite Chevron-Texaco for negotiations as mentioned in the news item. On the contrary, Chevron-Texaco requested Tullow for negotiations on January 7. Mobil-Petronas-Bapex joint venture will hold discussion with Tullow on January 9.

Gram Parishad

From page 1

The manager of the Dhanmondi branch, Jayton Saif, has informed the Bangladesh Bank investigators in writing that these cheques and other pay-orders were purchased on the specific order of the head office of IFIC.

From her statement, it is now clear that the bank had been used by the Rahman brothers in improperly procuring funds and had involved officials ranging from the branch manager to high ups in the head office in cheque purchasing which goes against IFIC's own rules as well as existing banking rules.

Till date the IFIC has not taken any action against the officials involved in the IBP scandal.

In giving such favour to these two directors, the bank has violated a number of banking laws all of which are punishable as criminal act.

According to clause 27(2) of the Bank Company Act, 1991, the Board of a bank must approve any loan or advance to companies related to any of the directors. However, in giving advances to companies of Salman and Sohail Rahman, no such board approval was taken in violation of the law.

To stop insider loans, the BB had issued a circular in 1995 (letter no 15/95) instructing branches to take prior permission of the central bank while giving loans above Tk 10 lakh to companies linked to respective bank's directors. The articles of association of IFIC also contains a clause in its para 53 regarding such loans. All these rules and instructions had been violated in giving loans through IBP to companies in which the Rahman brothers have interests.

Three-nation business summit now on Jan 15

By Staff Correspondent

The Three Nation Business Summit, postponed earlier, will now be held in Dhaka on January 15.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad told The Daily Star last night that he had received confirmation from Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Indian Prime Minister I K Gujral that both would be in Dhaka to participate in the Summit on the 15th of this month.

"The Summit will now take place. We all are now looking forward with great expectation towards hosting a successful Business Summit in Dhaka, the first of its kind, on that date," Samad Azad said over telephone.

Details of the Summit would be chalked out in the next two or three days, he said. Asked about the itinerary of the two prime ministers, the Foreign Minister said details of their arrival and departure will be finalised shortly.

He also hoped that Pakistan Prime Minister will be able to go ahead with a bilateral visit of Bangladesh after the Summit, as scheduled earlier.

Samad Azad said the Business Summit will take place as per the 'agreed agenda' drawn up by the leaders and officials of the three countries.

The agreed agenda include holding the Summit on one day, split into three sessions: an inaugural ceremony to be addressed by the three prime ministers and two business sessions to be participated by leaders of trade and commerce in the three countries.

The Summit was earlier scheduled to be held on November 23 last. It was postponed three days before that date due to political compulsions in Pakistan and India.

Meanwhile, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) Yussuf Abdullah Haroon told The Daily Star that he was preparing to invite his counterparts in the two other countries to ensure maximum participation.

Some 75 businessmen from the three countries are likely to attend the Business Summit.

It is learnt that ahead of the Summit, a two-day 'experts group meeting' of senior officials of the three countries would be held in Dhaka on January 13 and 14 to review the overall agenda.

The Draft of the Dhaka Declaration which was drawn up earlier is likely to be approved at the meeting.

Addressing a rally in front of the BNP office in the town today, the opposition leaders held the DC responsible for what they said repression on Nistar.

The rally was addressed by District BNP general secretary Moniruzzaman Khan Bulbul, district Jubo Dal convenor Ali Imam Tanim, Chhatra Dal leader Hasanuljamil Shaheen, Secchasebak Dal leaders M Shah Alam and Kazi Shaqir Rahman Lito.

The speakers said the Jubo Dal leader Nistar was tortured after he was arrested by DC Abdus Sattar Khan on Tuesday from his village home at Naruchi in Gopalgur thana of the district.

Quake rocks Meghalaya

NEW DELHI, Jan 3: An earthquake measuring 4.9 on the open-ended Richter scale today rocked the far eastern Indian state of Meghalaya, the United News of India reported, says AFP.

The tremor lasted a few seconds and caused no damage, it said.

IFIC bank

From page 1

The committee is to find out who is to be blamed for the irregularities which have put IFIC's reputation at stake and created a deep crisis in the bank's affairs.

The committee will present its report to the board today at the meeting.

Ferry

From page 1

Meanwhile, BIWTC has taken some measures to improve ferry service in Aricha — Natakholia route. Four more ferries were deployed there. Except one, all ferries were now in operation.

counts of the cheque issuing companies.

Eight companies had issued these 77 cheques and pay-orders for an amount of Tk 39.23 cr. Of these eight companies, Salman and Sohail Rahman have business interests in all of them excepting one. These seven companies issued the earlier mentioned cheques, for purchase by IFIC, in favour of four companies which are all owned either by these two brothers or closely linked with them. These companies are Beximco Investment Company Ltd (BICL), Beximco Textiles Ltd, Beximco Foods Ltd and Mallik Exports Ltd.

The Dhanmondi branch of IFIC Bank had sent these cheques for encashment to Sathkira branch of Arab Bangladesh Bank. But these cheques bounced because of insufficient fund in the accounts making the whole process one of pre-planned fraud and deception.

Later, IFIC bank adjusted the money by debiting Tk 63.80 cr from accounts in the Dhanmondi branch of the party (?). It was also found that while adjusting the unpaid money of one IBP, more IBPs had been created through similar means.

These events clearly prove that the companies related to the interests of IFIC directors Salman F Rahman and Sohail F Rahman had deliberately issued false cheques knowing fully well about the insufficiency of fund in their accounts. This clearly tantamounts to fraudulent act, the Bangladesh Bank letter sent to Chairman

ing of most of the allocated LPG cylinders to shipbreaking yards in Chittagong leads to a short supply of the cooking gas in the northern districts.

Taking advantage of the situation, the dealers in the region have raised the selling price of a cylinder between Tk 400 and Tk 600, compared to the fixed rate of Tk 250.

Regular availability of LPG will reduce the consumption of firewood for cooking, which, in turn, will reduce deforestation, the sources said, arguing for the early setting up of the plant.

A bottling plant will not only reduce the risk of carrying the gas cylinders, but will also be cost-effective, create employment and make the gas available to the northern people, said one official.

Meanwhile, an Energy Ministry official said before giving final approval for setting up bottling plant, the government gave permission to the private sector for importing LPG without ensuring terminal and storage facilities at the Chittagong port that is a must to handle this type of gas.

3 killed as bus, truck collide in Kushtia

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Jan 3: Three people, including a minor boy were killed and 40 others injured at Godapara on Kushtia-Ishwardi highway at noon today.

Police said the accident occurred when a Pabna-bound bus collided head on with a truck coming from opposite direction. Both the vehicles turned turtle.

Of the dead, one was identified as Nasrin Akhter, 19, a student of Kushtia Polytechnic Institute.

The unidentified body of a young man and the minor boy were sent to Kushtia General Hospital.

Of the injured, 23 were admitted to the hospital. The rest were released after first aid.

Newly appointed ministers visit Bangabandhu's grave

Newly appointed ministers, state ministers and deputy minister yesterday offered *fateha* at the grave of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Tungipara, reports UNB.

They are Civil Aviation Minister Engineer Mosharraf Hossain, Minister without portfolio Kalpanarajan Chakma, State Minister for Primary and Mass Education Prof Zinatun-Nessa Talukder, State Minister for LGRD Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury, State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources Prof Rafiqul Islam, State Minister for Textile AKM Jahangir and Deputy Minister for Shipping Saber Hossain Chowdhury.

Rotary Int'l president in city

Rotary International President Glen W Kinross arrived in Dhaka last night on a three-day visit to Bangladesh, reports UNB.

He was received at the Zia International Airport by District Governor M Jamaludding and senior Rotarians.

During his stay in Dhaka, he will review Rotary's service projects such as literacy, immunization, agricultural development programmes.

He is accompanied by his wife Heather and Rotary International directors Edgar Hatcher and Rafael Hachenova. Kinross is also scheduled to call on President Shahabuddin Ahmed.

Indian sugar seized at Barisal

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Jan 3: Police seized 22 bags of Indian sugar from a godown opened by one Swapan Saha of Kapuripatti in the town last night.

Acting on a tip-off, Kotwali police raided the godown and seized the bags of sugar.

Police also seized the truck that carried sugar from Daulatpur of Khulna and arrested its driver Dharendra Chandra and helper Alam.

The owner of the godown is yet to be arrested.

ULFA leader

From page 1

months back." BBC also said Bangladesh State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury denied receiving any formal request for Barua's extradition to India.

The Bangladesh government also denied the arrest of any member of the ULFA, the BBC report from Calcutta added.

Algeria

From page 1

splattered with blood, before breaking out in tears. She spoke on condition of anonymity.

Many surviving families planned to move to the nearby port of Oran.

"Leaving is better than dying," said villager Amar Meziani. "I'm leaving everything here, my house, my crops, what's left of my livestock. To go where? I don't know, but I can't stay here."

"I'm too old to carry a weapon. I'll return when it's calm."

There was no claim of responsibility for the attack, but suspicion fell on the Armed Islamic Group, the insurgency's most violent movement that has claimed responsibility for past bombings and massacres.

Khaleda

From page 1

weekly holiday and again declaring Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's birth and death anniversaries as public holidays.

Charging the government with treason, she said "this government is not patriotic...So, it has become obligatory for each and every citizen of the country to join the movement against it."

Begum Zia called upon her party leaders and workers to step up organisational activities in the month of Ramadan to strengthen the BNP as a preparation to take part in an out-the-government movement after Eid.

Turning to the economic situation, she said the economy has collapsed totally with stagnancy in the month of Ramadan, closure of mills and factories, and opening up the borders to facilitate the Indian goods to capture the local market.

"The country has reached a critical stage. Not only the country's sovereignty, the future of our next generation is also not safe in the hands of the present government. Therefore, no conscious citizens can support this government," she observed.

Raising the JCD's role in the anti-autocracy movement in the past, the BNP Chairperson said the JCD would have to take the leadership again to carry forward the future movement for saving the nation from the present 'autocratic regime'.

Keraniganj murder

From page 1

The brutal killings created panic in Keraniganj, a city suburb across Buriganga river.

Witnesses and police said Torikulah was attacked by an unidentified armed gang when he was going home by rickshaw through Gulshan cinema hall area in Aganagar.

The armed men fired several shots on Torikulah. He fell down on the ground. The attackers then stabbed him indiscriminately and fled the scene.

Local people immediately took blood-soaked Torikulah to the Mitford Hospital where doctors declared him dead. Hospital sources said Torikulah's body bore marks of at least five bullets and deep stab injuries.

Angry supporters of Torikulah gathered as soon as the news of their leader's death spread in Keraniganj.

They gheraoed Ambagicha area where Nurul Islam resided and caught him. They also set several shanties on fire.

Tension mounted in Keraniganj and Sadarghat launch terminal as Torikulah's supporters controlled the city's river port for a long time.

Kotwali police said they sent extra police force to the launch terminal following the killings. Keraniganj police could not arrest anyone in connection with the killings till filing of this report last night. Police said they were preparing to file

Body recovered from hotel at Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Jan 3: Police yesterday recovered the body of a businessman from a hotel in Talata area of the town.

The dead was identified as Kabir Ahmed, 51. He hailed from Dhaka city's Sabulbagh area. His body was found hanging from a ceiling fan of a room in the East End Hotel. The door of the room was bolted from inside.

Kabir booked the hotel room on Monday last and since then he did not open the door. On suspicion, the hotel staff informed the police yesterday afternoon who recovered the body after breaking open the door.

The body was sent to the M A G Osmani Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

PCJSS for talks

From page 1

cial for the future of the CHT accord, signed on December 2. The accord provides for submission of lists of Shantibahini's arms and ammunition and its cadres within 45 days of its signing. A surrender ceremony is to follow within 45 days of that, the accord stipulates.

But the PCJSS leaders last week sent feelers that they would not submit the lists unless the government provides legal cover to the accord.

They have been assured of it with the summoning of Jatiya Sangsad on January 14.

Three amendments to the Hill District Council Act, incorporating the provisions of the CHT accord, empowering a proposed elected Regional Council to supervise and coordinate administration, development and law and order in the hill districts are likely to be placed before the parliament.

The parliament is to debate various aspects of the accord.

Our Khagrachhari correspondent Shuvro Jyoti Chakma said the PCJSS has urged the

NCCHT to send its reply by January.

The PCJSS has proposed that the meeting be held at Khagrachhari circuit house. It has also requested the NCCHT to arrange transportation of the PCJSS leaders to the meeting place from their traditional transit camp at Dudukchaha at 10:30 am on January 15 and adequate security for their leaders during the meeting.

PCJSS sources said they have also proposed discussion with the NCCHT on implementing another aspect of the accord — to roll back temporary camps of the Army, Ansars and VDP to their permanent bases and set a time table for it.

Only the six Cantonments and BDR camps would remain in the CHT as per the agreement.

PCJSS sources said they have started collecting arms and ammunition from their cadres. Members of the PCJSS and its armed cadres are also preparing to pack up and celebrate its founding day at Chimbuk in southern Tripura for the last time, in preparation of laying down their arms.

Gram Parishad

From page 1

conducting the Gram Parishad election through officials of the district election office or the thana administration.

The sources said involving the election commission in it will incur an expenditure of forty to forty-five crore taka which the government wants to avoid.

The Gram Parishad Bill, 1997 was passed by the Jatiya Sangsad in September last year. The Act, however, was challenged in the High Court on grounds that it violated certain provisions of the Constitution.

Hearing of the writ petition challenging the GP Act is scheduled to begin on January 19.

Tendulker

From page 1

AFP.

"I want to put the past behind me. We have gone through a very turbulent year and have to be more positive. All of us need to have the killer instinct in us."

"The issue is not to dwell on the past, but look ahead into the future. We have picked the best team we could and we hope to win the Bangladesh tournament," he said.

Indian squad for Bangladesh tri-nation tournament: Mohammad Azharuddin (capt), Sachin Tendulkar, Ajay Jadeja, Saurav Ganguly, Navjit Sidhu, Robin Singh, Javagal Srinath, Hrishikesh Kanitkar, Sairaj Bahutule, Debashish Mohanty, Harvinder Singh, Rahul Singhvi, V S Lakshman, Nayan Mongia (wicketkeeper).

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