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Tremor in China kills 47

BEIJING, Jan 10: A powerful earthquake flattened farming villages near the Great Wall today, killing 47 people and leaving tens of thousands homeless, China's state-run media reported, says AP.

The magnitude 6.2 quake toppled hundreds of houses — many of them rustic mud and brick peasant homes — across two counties in the Yan Mountains. The tremor shook buildings 250 kilometers (150 miles) to the south in Beijing.

Rescue teams found the county seat of Zhangbei devastated with nearly all houses collapsed and 20,000 families without homes, the Xinhua News Agency said. It said another 800 houses had collapsed or cracked in the neighbouring county seat of Shangyi, on Hebei province's border with Inner Mongolia.

In four towns along the two counties border, 80 per cent of the houses had collapsed, said Huangfu Qing, a seismologist coordinating rescue work from Zhangjiakou, a city bordering See Page 12 Col 5

Strike in edn boards to be suspended from tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

The Inter-education Board Employees' Federation in an emergency meeting yesterday decided to suspend its indefinite strike from Monday.

The emergency meeting of the Federation was held at its central office located at the Madrassah Board.

Amjad Hossain Bakshi, president of the Federation, told The Daily Star last night that the Federation has decided to suspend its indefinite strike that began from January 4, in view of the upcoming SSC and HSC examinations.

The meeting decided to suspend the indefinite strike in view of the assurance given by the Education Minister for further See Page 12 Col 7

Inside Today

Article

Local bodies elections

Motorway to the Heart of the Problem

Column: As I See It by Ikram Sehgal Page 4

Sehri, Iftar timings				
Ramadan	Jan	Sehri	Iftar	
11	11	5-20	5-33	
12	12	5-20	5-34	
13	13	5-20	5-35	

An emergency meeting of the council held at the Bangladesh See Page 12 Col 8

NOTICE

(Regarding Audit of Firms Registered under Value Added Tax)

“জাতীয় রাজস্ব সংরক্ষণে অংশ নিব”
“সুসক অভিতে সহযোগিতা করুন”

Value Added Tax (VAT) system has been introduced from 1st July, 1991. Under this system, a tax-payer himself calculates the payable tax at the time of delivering/providing the goods or service to the consumer and deposits in the government exchequer. That is a goods manufacturer/service provider realises this tax from the consumer at the time of selling goods/providing service and deposits in the government exchequer.

The responsibility of VAT management is to verify whether this tax is properly calculated and paid in due time & due amount and maintain the national revenue paid by the consumer.

To ensure realisation of the due amount of revenue in due time, the VAT management often undertakes audit of some activities of some selected tax-payer firms. For this, the selected firm for audit is earlier informed to keep ready such documents of account as may be required for audit. Therefore, it is not possible to complete the audit smoothly & effectively within the prescribed time without sincere cooperation of the authorities of registered firm.

Under Rule 34 of VAT Act 1991 any registered tax-payer firm is bound to produce any kind of document of accounts to the audit officers on demand; otherwise it is considered as punishable offence under Rule 37.

Under the circumstance, all the tax-payer firms registered under VAT Act are requested to actively cooperate in the outing. The respective firm may ensure prior to auditing, whether the audit officers are carrying proper ID Card & audit order issued by the Commissioner concerned.

DFF-164/1
G-54

National Board of Revenue

Well played, boys

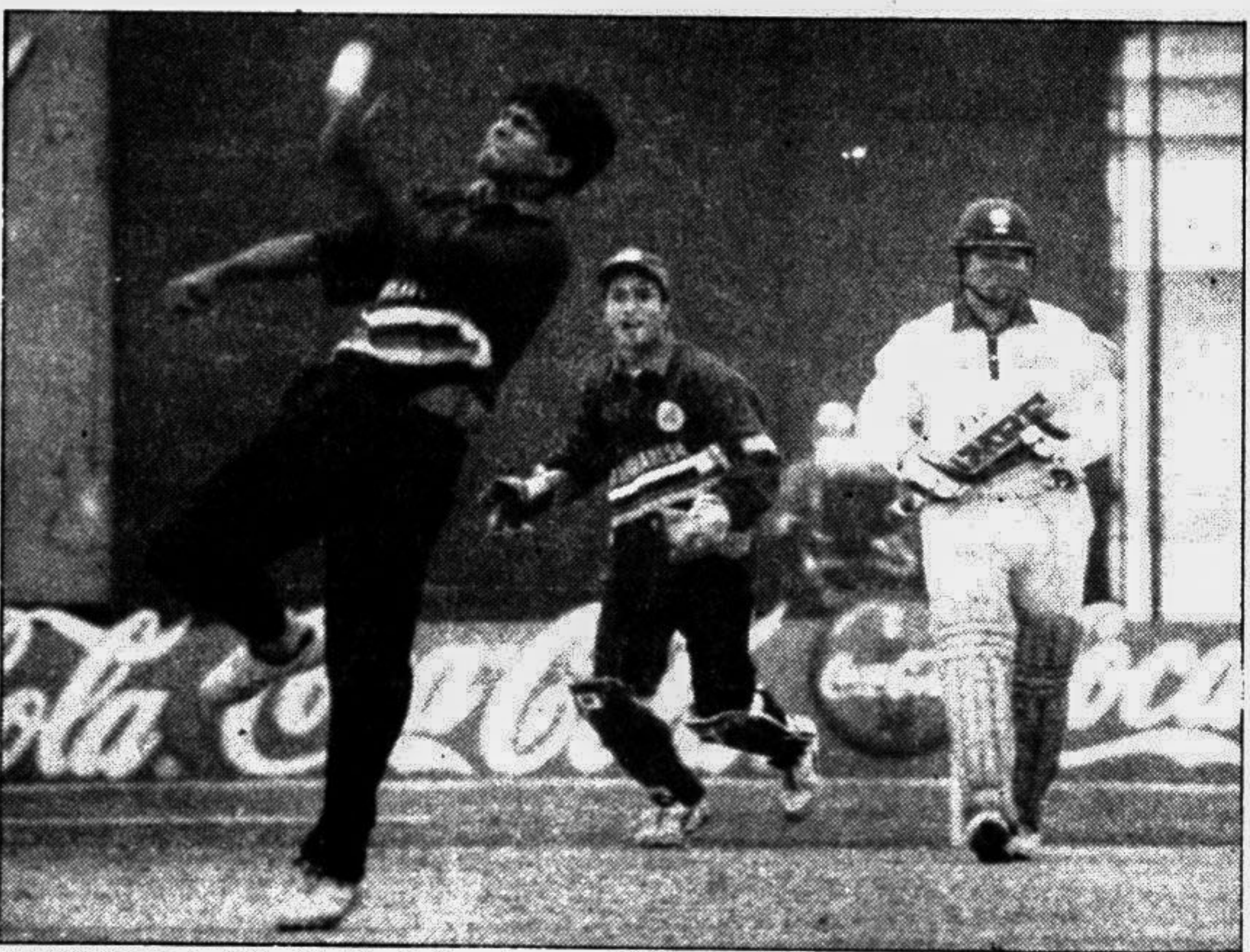
Independence Cup cricket

Sports Reporter

Javagal Srinath returned with a career best five for 23 to give India a predictable, yet perplexing start with a four-wicket win over babes Bangladesh in the inaugural match of the Coca-Cola Independence Cup at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

The tall right-arm Karnataka seamer, who made the most of an overcast condition after his captain Mohammad Azharuddin won the toss and decided to field, captured five wickets in his share of 10 overs to restrict Bangladesh to an attainable target of 190 in a truncated 48-over-a-side match. His previous best haul in limited-over cricket was five for 24 against Sri Lanka at Kanpur in 1993-94.

Azharuddin then went on to celebrate his reappointment as Indian captain with a watchful 84. Coming in to bat number three, the Hyderabad-born India captain, who returned to the helm replacing Sachin Tendulkar on January 2, played a very responsible knock to help his team overhaul the victory See Page 12 Col 4



The 'little master' Sachin Tendulkar is gone. Mohammad Rafique, the bowler who took the return catch, and wicketkeeper Khaled Masud have all the reasons to celebrate.

—Star photo by AKM Mohsin

Pakistan, India meet today

Sports Reporter

Arch rivals and former world champions Pakistan and India will meet today the second day of the Independence Cup Cricket tournament.

Weather permits, the match will kick-off at Dhaka Stadium at 9 in the morning.

India earned two points yesterday beating Bangladesh by four wickets in the opener.

Hosts Bangladesh will play their second and last first round match against Pakistan on January 12.

The top two teams of the first round will qualify for the three-match finals to be held on See Page 12 Col 3



SEE YOU TOMORROW! Indian and Pakistani skippers Azharuddin (L) and Rashid Latif shake hands at a function at the Sonargaon Hotel yesterday.

—Star photo

Benazir files corruption cases against Sharif

ISLAMABAD, Jan 10: Benazir Bhutto, whose government was dismissed on charges of massive fraud, filed three charges of corruption today against her arch-rival Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, reports AP.

Accusing Sharif's administration of launching a political vendetta to destroy her and her family, Benazir filed her charges with the state-run anti-corruption commission.

Despite her claims that the commission is a thinly veiled 'get Benazir commission', Benazir told reporters that 'we would like to explore every forum.'

The commission will study the evidence supplied by Benazir and decide whether to recommend Sharif stand trial on corruption charges.

Benazir's Pakistan People's Party is accusing Sharif of orchestrating a nation-wide wheat shortage that caused small riots around the country last year.

Benazir said the wheat shortage enabled a US-based company owned by Sharif to make a windfall on supplying and transporting wheat to Pakistan.

Sharif has denied the allegations.

Benazir also accused Sharif of permitting business friends to import luxury vehicles at unrealistically low prices and of failing to declare property either See Page 12 Col 1

Hasina enjoys opening tie

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday witnessed the opening match of the Independence Cup Cricket at the Dhaka National Stadium taking time off from her busy official schedule, reports UNB.

An avowed sports fan, Hasina cheered all the time to encourage the Bangladeshi cricketers to set a respectable target against the powerful Indians, former world champions.

She looked quite sportive. Donning a white cricket cap, she clapped at each four and six hit by the Bangladeshi boys.

The Prime Minister stayed at the stadium for more than one and a half hour. Environment and Forest Minister Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury and Awami League president member Syeda Zohra Tajuddin were seen with the Prime Minister at the VIP gallery.

Mercury to fall, sky may remain a little cloudy

Star Report

Cold, dry and foggy weather will persist over the country today, the Meteorological Department in a forecast said yesterday.

The sky will remain partly cloudy during the day, but visibility is likely to improve further.

Mercury is expected to fall further at night, the Met office added.

Visibility was recorded at 2000 metre at 6 am yesterday which went up to 4000 metre. Visibility was 20 metre on January 3.

The Coca Cola Cricket tournament started 44 minutes behind schedule yesterday due to See Page 12 Col 3

3-nation business summit Task force may be formed to face global challenges

By Toufique Imrose Khalidi

The three-nation Business Summit in Dhaka this Thursday is expected to create a mechanism to try to 'pull resources together' for the region to unitedly fight the new global trade regime and tap economic opportunities, officials and business sources said.

A task force, comprising both businessmen and civil servants from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, is likely to be launched by the conference that is scheduled to bring to Dhaka prime ministers of the three countries, their trade and economic ministers, heads of national chambers and senior civil servants.

"Unless we get together and pull our resources together, we cannot face the enormous challenges from the West," said Yusuf Abdullah Harun, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), portraying the key plank behind the January 15 event, a brainchild of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Bangladeshi businessmen also want the exercise to continue as an annual event, which they propose to be hosted by the three capitals by rotation. The task force has been conceived to carry forward the agenda, with plans for frequent meetings among the three countries.

"We need to emerge as a bloc to negotiate in the global market," Harun said, "because globalisation has created new challenges for countries like ours."

Government officials also agree with Harun. "How to face the rest of the world in terms of protecting our interests in areas we have advantages" would be a key question, said Foreign Secretary Mustafizur Rahman.

Both the officials and the businessmen speak of these countries' comparative advantages which need to be identified, and according to Harun, "this is precisely what we need to do or find out at the summit."

"We will try to devise ways how to cooperate and (define) what areas (are there) to coop-

Complete Bangabandhu's unfinished tasks: PM

"Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called upon the people to wage a fresh war against poverty and hunger for building a happy and prosperous nation as dreamt by the Bangabandhu, reports UNB.

She was addressing a discussion meeting marking the home-coming day of father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Central Awami League organised the meeting at the Engineers Institution in the city.

On this day in 1972, Bangabandhu returned to independent Bangladesh after nine months of captivity in the Pakistan jail.

"The best way to pay homage to this great leader who made supreme sacrifice for the well-being of the nation is to complete his unfinished tasks aimed at building a poverty free Sonar Bangla," she said.

"You will have to show tolerance, you will have to sacrifice more for the interest of the nation to maintain the pace of development aiming at freeing the nation from poverty," she said.

Hasina expressed her strong optimism that the nation will be able to achieve the economic self-reliance by utilising its limited resources and vast human resources.

"We will be able to raise our heads as a prosperous and dignified nation in the coming century. The country will not remain poor any more, it will be turned into an economic power in the South Asia," she hoped.

The Prime Minister said the democracy has been placed on a firm footing with the securing of voting rights of the people and now only objective of the government is to work for en-

Revenue collection still Tk 550cr below target

By Shehab Ahmed

The Revenue collection during the first half of the fiscal 1997-98 remained short by about Tk 550 crore against the target of Tk 6803.29 crore, according to a preliminary assessment of the National Board of Revenue (NBR).

The collection in the first quarter was Tk 220.04 crore short of targeted Tk 3298.80 crore.

The revenue collection shortfall during the first six months has again made the NBR's task difficult to meet the annual target of Tk 15,000 crore, officials said.

The target was described by critics as too ambitious in the wake of failure to meet the previous fiscal's goal by about Tk 600 crore against the target of Tk 13,040 crore.

The shortfall may affect the financing of ADP project which are likely to be pruned.

The collection was sluggish in December when only 89.16 per cent of the target was attained. Overall target achievement rate in the two quarter's was 91.70 per cent. It was 9.25 per cent higher than the corresponding period of the previous year.

Revenue collection in the import sector fell short by Tk 329.86 crore against the target of Tk 4120.87 crore.

The excise duty, both VAT See Page 12 Col 3

Gujral, Sharif to hold exclusive talks in Dhaka

Indian Prime Minister IK Gujral and Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif will have exclusive talks Thursday afternoon during the business summit in the city, reports UNB.

Gujral is expected to arrive on January 14 and Sharif on January 15.

The longstanding Kashmir issue may figure in prominently at the meeting the agency said quoting sources concerned.

Another report says, Nawaz Sharif will lead a high profile delegation.

His entourage will include Pakistan Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub, Finance, Economic Affairs, Planning and Development Minister Sartaj Aziz, Commerce Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Chairman of Board of Investment Humayun Akhtar, who enjoys the rank of full minister, and Foreign Secretary Shamshad Ahmed.

Besides, about 25 top business leaders and a 12-member media team will accompany the Pakistan Prime Minister. The business leaders include FPCCI president Senator Ilyas Ahmed Bhowar and its vice-president and chairman of zonal committee of FPCCI Iftikhar Malik.

The Pakistan premier will begin a two-day bilateral visit See Page 12 Col 1

Businessman shot dead in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 10: Unidentified gunmen shot dead a businessman at Chatteshari road in the city today, police said.

The victim was identified as Abul Kalam Azad, a businessman of Jahur Hawker market under Kotwali thana.

Police informed that the gunman fired on him at around 2:30 pm on his way back home.

The victim with bullet wounds ran into the godown of a paints company from where some workers took him to Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

Attending doctors at the hospital declared him dead.

However, police could not find out the reason behind the killing.

Movable property of 22 alleged killers seized in Keraniganj

By Staff Correspondent

Movable property of the 22 people accused in the murder of Nurul Islam were seized by Keraniganj police yesterday.

Police said they attached the property of the 22 accused after receiving a court order Friday night. The court also issued arrest warrants against the 22 accused in the case lodged by Nilufar Islam, wife of Nurul Islam.

Meanwhile, a CID team took up the murder case of Nurul Islam on Thursday. Police earlier arrested two persons in connection with the murder of Nurul Islam. However, none of the accused in the killing of Tarikulah have been arrested so far.

Newly-elected UP chairman Tarikulah and Nurul Islam were brutally murdered at Aganagar area within a span of two hours on Saturday last.

Armed robbers rule Sundarbans

By Morshed Ali Khan, back from the Sundarbans

Lawlessness reigns in most parts of the Sundarbans as armed robbers in mechanised boats roam its interior freely and conduct systematic extortion," according to forest officials and local people.

Forest officials in Khulna Divisional headquarters said that the interior of the Sundarbans, the largest mangrove forest in the world, "belonged to the outlaws."

At this time of the year hundreds of tourists visit the area under our supervision with armed guards," said an official of the forest department. "But individuals going to the forest without armed escort run great risk of robbery, abduction and even torture by these gangs."

At Dhaingmari Forest Office, Deputy Ranger Habibur Rahman Khan said almost every licensed fisherman, woodcutter and honey collector is subjected to extortion by these gangs.

"These people are seasoned criminals and they know the forest very well," said the Deputy Ranger. "Whenever we go out for patrol they hide inside the canals. And they benefit from the enormous resources of the Sundarbans."

Local fishermen and woodcutters said, besides Forest Department's patrol in the vast forest area, police, Coast Guards and the Navy have their own surveillance teams. But Coast Guards and Navy patrols usually pass through the big rivers. They said the police are only seen after a crime has been committed.

Usually, every gang operating in the Sundarbans claims link with an influential personality of Khulna division or even a place further away, local people said.

Salek Sardar, a fisherman from Chila village near Mangla town said he spends at least five nights a week in the forest, fishing with other fishermen. "The armed men numbering between five and six come in a mechanised boat and hold us under powerful torch light and we hand them over some of our catches or money," Salek said.

"If anyone refuses, the gang picks him up and sends his family a note for ransom."

When asked whether he could name any one of the robbers, Salek replied in the affirmative. "Every one knows them. There is Akram dacot from Ranjoypur village under Rampal thana and he controls the western part of the Pashur river."

Salek named few more da-



Woodcutter's boat in Sundarbans which is often subjected to robbery.

ADVANCED DEVELOPMENT TECHNOLOGIES

IDLC

A Memorandum for extending credit facilities to individual apartment purchasers was signed recently by IDLC the main lease financing institution of Bangladesh with Advanced Development Technologies Ltd the leading developers and builders of the country. The Managing Directors of the respective organizations, Mr Aminul Islam Chowdhury (second right) and Mr Salim A Khan(second left) initialled the Memorandum. Engr S M Anwar Hossain (right) Chairman of Advanced Development Technologies Ltd and Mr B C Kim (right) DMD of IDLC witnessed the signing. Also present were Mr M Shafiqur Rahman DMD Designate (standing right) Mr Mofizur Rahman General Manager (standing left) and Mr Zakir Hossain, Sr Officer (standing second right) of IDLC. Standing in middle and second left are Mr A Q Jewel, Sr Manager and Mr Ashrafuzzaman, Sr Executive (Customer Finance) of Advanced Development Technologies Ltd.