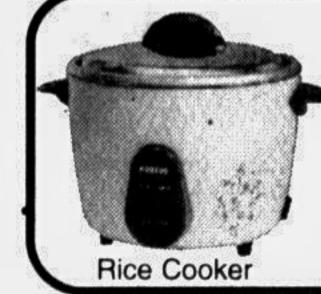
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Sheikh Kamal said, army brothers, come inside

At the crack of dawn on August 15, army groups crawling from two directions entered Bangabandhu's residence and the tragedy occurred, says the then chief of police protection force of the President's House, reports UNB.

Retired Police Super Nurul Islam, making his deposition as the 50th witness in the Bangabandhu Murder Case, said Bangabandhu came down from upstairs and tried to talk over phone from the reception room at the downstairs of the house just before the firing be-

The firing from south-eastern direction started when Bangabandhu was trying to talk over phone. Some bullets hit the reception room through the

Earlier, he said he along with a police sergeant taking rest at the drawing room on the ground floor of the house got up as they heard the voice of Bangabandhu from upstairs at about 4.45 am.

Nurul Islam said he was the DSP for police protection force of Bangabandhu's house and joined the duty at 8 pm on August 14 to continue his duty till 8 am next day.

He said besides the police protection force of the President's House there was a group of army, which joined the security after coming from Comilla. The witness said Bangabandhu returned home at about

8:30 pm on August 14. Narrating, he said after the

Australia and Bangladesh

yesterday agreed to further ex-

pand bilateral economic coop-

eration, particularly in the

field of trade and investment.

at official talks between Dhaka

and Canberra at State Guest

House Meghna in the afternoon

Minister Alexander Downer led

his country's delegation at the

hour-long meeting while For-

eign Minister Abdus Samad

continued development pro-

grammes in Bangladesh and fi-

Sessions court

cluded within two to three

months. The authorities are

planning to announce the

posting of the Metropolitan

Session Judge after that, the

judge of the rank of Sessions

Judge. There will be five Addi-

tional Sessions Judges and

seven Assistant Sessions

has created the necessary posts

sanctioned the required budget.

The MCS is likely to sit in the

same premises where the Court

of District and Sessions Judge

is located new, the law ministry

made as early as in 1976, to be

made effective from 1979, under

the same law which provided

for the creation of the

metropolitan magistracy and

set up by the Awami League gov-

ernment early this year, sug-

gested creation of the MCS for

A four-member committee.

the metropolitan courts.

The provision for MCS was

while the Finance Ministry has

The Establishment Ministry

The MCS will be run by a

sources added.

Judges.

sources said.

From page 1

Downer assured Australia's

Azad led the home side.

Visiting Australian Foreign

The agreement was reached

reports UNB.

first firing he came out of the drawing room and inquired about it. The police sentries informed him of the attack from

He said he ordered the house guards to counter fire, but could not say whether his order was carried out or not.

Islam said minutes after the first firing that pierced the reception room heavy firing started and he heard sounds of four to five mortar shelling.

As firing stopped after about five minutes, the witness said, Bangabandhu came to the front verandah and asked him about the firing incident. He also asked the police and army guards of the house.

"Sir, the house is under attack," Nurul Islam told Bangabandhu.

He told the court that at that moment he and Bangabandhu saw few army personnel in khaki and black uniform from south-east and south-west directions crawling towards the

Bangabandhu hurriedly went upstairs, he said adding soon after Bangabandhu's eldest son Sheikh Kamal came to the verandah on the ground floor and asked him whether army had arrived or not.

He said he told Sheikh Kamal that probably army had come and Sheikh Kamal in loud voice said, "army brothers, you have come, come inside," the

See page 2

nancial aid to the development

annual aid budget of AUD 33.3

million for Bangladesh in

1997-98 that constitutes AUD

28.3 million for food pro-

Downer offered 24 addi-

tional scholarships for

He mentioned Australia's

of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Samad Azad, Australian FM hold talks

Continued development

programmes assured

gramme

From page the stadium for the colourful ceremony

BLUE DART

EXPRESS

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School children in white, landing on the field.

a message: Long live peace. Thousands cheered as Army bands played marching tunes when the guerillas bid farewell to their arms. One of them, in an emotional outburst, kissed

his gun before laying it down alongside the assorted arsenal that included the Bolt Action Lee Enfields to Ak-47's, some 400 in total. In a last rite of their regimented style, they placed their

guns, which were emptied of ammunition earlier yesterday when they reported to the security forces for the surrender ceremony at a raised platform draped in red carpet After laying the guns they

Bangladeshi students in Ausmarched back to their chairs. tralia this year and training for two young cricket players at the Australian Cricket Academy. "There is an investment opleading the armed cadres who portunity in Bangladesh," he

said, adding that the Australian investors would be interested in investment in mineral, energy and agriculture sectors. When asked about Aus-

tralian aid for development of Chittagong Hill Tracts, he said "There is a possibility ... We will have to look at it and see what we can do. Australia is also planning to

finance the government to set up an independent human rights commission in Bangladesh.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad said they had a "very fruitful and constructive meeting" on bilateral matters and discussed how to promote trade, investment and economic cooperation.

He said regional and inter national issues were also discussed during the meeting.

Earlier, Alexander Downer, who leads a four-member delegation, flew into Dhaka from Pakistan on a two-day visit to Bangladesh. Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad received

Other members of the Australian delegation are: Greg Robinson, Advisor to the Foreign Minister, Tim George, Assistant Secretary South Asia and Indian Ocean Branch, Kai Detto, Acting Assistant Director General AUS Aid, and Barabara Rayner, Advisor to

quick disposal of criminal the Foreign Minister.

Hartal in Ctg Divn

From page 1

attempt of violence. UNB from Rangamati add: Attendance in government offices was thin while the streets wore a deserted look as the people kept indoor and in absence of vehicles.

The district BNP and its allies held rallies protesting the CHT peace accord.

Pahari Gano Parishad and Pahari Chhatra Parishad held rallies at Kutubchhari Bazar and Naniachhar thana headquarters, expressing their firm determination to continue their movement until the establishment of a Jummaland.

Another report from Bandabran adds: Educational institutions and business establishments were closed, and all sorts of vehicles stayed off the roads during the hartal hours.

Additional police were deployed in the town to ward off any untoward incident. In the evening, local unit of BNP held a protest rally at the

traffic point in the town. Among others, district BNP convenor Adv Kazi Mohitul Hossain, district Jamaat-e-lslami Ameer Moulana Ruhul

Amin and Khalilur Rahman,

Abdul Mabud, Lusaimong and

Abdul Malek addressed the

meeting. They described the speech of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina delivered at the Khagraehhari Stadium on the occasion of arms surrendering by the members of Shantibahini as false

and far from truth. They said 12 other small tribal groups of the hill districts have been ignored by welcoming only an identified group and described the day as black day

in the nation's history. A report from Feni adds: All modes of vehicles stayed off the streets while shops and other business establishment were closed during the hartal hours.

Crackers were exploded in different parts of the town. None was reported injured.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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A section of the tribal people at the Khagrachhari Stadium gallery demonstrating yesterday demanding full autonomy for CHT. -Star photo

A farewell to arms

tribal girls in their traditional colourful dresses and artistes later danced with pigeons fluttering, some started to fly after long stay inside their cages, Balloons were released with

wheeled past the dais and Earlier, 'Major' Ashapurna Chakma was the first to enter the Khagrachhari Stadium,

followed the non-armed mili-"I am feeling happy, the 'commander' said when journalists insisted for comments But he would not give details of

his unit or when he joined the bush war. However, he mellowed when asked him some mundane questions like what he was go-

ing to do returning back to civilian life.

He gave his age as 46, his address at the village of Krish-

From page 1

The opposition leader said

Bangladesh did not emerge as

an independent country to be

subservient to another country

and urged every Bangladeshi

expatriate to play his role as a

ter sharing accord with India

and the CHT accord, she said

the government had sacrificed

water treaty became ineffective

the gathering that the govern-

ment is involved in a conspir-

acy to split the country by form-

ing an 'alternative government'

involving people backed by an-

Begum Zia said the govern-

ment is engaged in a conspiracy

against the majority of the

people and the motherland. The

CHT accord will create unrest in

within 3 months of its signing.

She alleged that the 30-year

The BNP Chairperson told

the country's interests.

other country

Referring to the Ganges wa-

representative of the country.

try's sovereignty is at stake.

nachara in Naniarchar of Rangamati district. He said he has a daughter

who is studying. "I have not de-

cided what I am going to do," the guerilla leader said holding his Ak-47 in support. "But first priority is home and nothing else matters now." he said before dismissing us as more journalists began to

gather to get something from

him after failing to squeeze

comments from others. Ashapurna politely told journalists that they should talk to his superiors to get details about the guerillas, including the arms they are deposit-

Dayamoy Chakma, 22, also echoed his commander's word that he was happy to lay down his gun and return home from the bushes. At least 20,000 people had

gathered at the newly built stadium. As the rag tag militias in their olive green uniforms entered the stadium ahead of the regulars to take their seats, they crowd cheered them. The rest of the guerillas will

deposit their guns in three phases on February 16, 22 and 28. They will be provided with Tk 50,000 each to start their life anew under a resettlement programme provided in the peace But not everyone who gath-

ered at the stadium shared the joy of Bhuban Chakma or Dayamoy Chakina. A small but visible group of young boys and girls surprised the tight security at the stadium by bringing out their posters in black and white and fluttering a makeshift black flag, when a girl removed

Their poster read: "We want full autonomy for CHT". They

She said the normal life of

She told the Bangladeshi

people have become unbearable

due to price hike of rice and

nationals in Jeddah that the

economic condition is on the

verge of ruination following

smuggling out of thousands of

crores of Taka from Bangladesh

and inflow of smuggled goods

without checking during the

Jeddah airport on Sunday

night, Begum Zia was received

by high officials of Saudi gov-

ernment protocol. A large num-

after Magreb prayers on Mon-

day at Makkah. She prayed for

the peace, progress and pros-

perity of Bangladesh and the

welcomed Begum Zia.

Muslim Ommah.

ber of Bangladeshi nationals

Begum Zia performed Omrah

Earlier on her arrival at

present regime.

other essential commodities.

the country, she added.

Accord to create unrest

chanted slogans which said they do not accept the 'accord of compromise'

The startled security personnel snatched the posters and took position amidst the activists of a breakway faction of Pahari Chhatra Parishad, a front organisation of the PCJSS. They became quiet later but made their presence felt before the cameras.

People of Khagrachhari town ignored a hartal call by the BNP-led Seven-party Alliance and headed for the stadium to attend the ceremony. People walked nearly two kilometers to reach the venue. Some were brought from outside the town by buses.

White flags greeted the visitors all the way from Chittagong to the town.

Security forces guarded the roads leading to the town. But some unidentified people disrupted traffic on Karerhat-Ramgarh road by removing some bolts from a bailey bridge 'at Fatikchhari thana which was quickly repaired.

BSS adds. After the arms laying ceremony, the Shantibahini members went back to their temporary camps at Perachara, four km from here, where they will stay overnight before they go back to their respective homes which they had deserted long before.

The government has already sanctioned general amnesty to those who will surrender arms and ammunition

The next phase of arms surrender will take place in Bagharchhari in Rangamati on February 16, Baradam High School ground in Khagrachhari and Dudukchhari under Khagrachhari on February 28.

Father, son killed in Bhaluka road accident

From Our Correspondent

MYMENSINGH, Feb 10: Father and son were killed and five others injured in a road accident near Bhaluka Degree College on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway today.

Bhaluka thana police said. the accident occurred when a Dhaka-bound private car collided head-on with a Mymensingh-bound truck at about ll am.

Two passengers of the car -Aminul Islam, 45, and his son Shaon, 17 died on the spot.

The injured Nurjahan, 15. Rahima, 15, Nupur, 18, driver of the car Nasiruddin, 30, Khodeja Begum, 30, and an ASI of police were admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

'Int'l database needed to face growing arsenic pollution' By Staff Correspondent

Scientists from nine countries including Bangladesh presented their papers yesterday at the conference on 'Arsenic Pollution of Groundwater in Bangladesh: Causes, effects and remedies' and focussed on vari-

ination problem. The papers were presented on the third day of the five-day conference that concludes on Thursday.

ous problems and remedies of

the prevailing arsenic contam-

The sessions covered topics related to nutrition, bio-availability, soil contamination, software development, arsenic exposure and clinical treatment

Jack Ng from Australia pointed out that the bio-availability of arsenic compounds were not uniform and they varied from site to site.

Dr P Basak suggested a costeffective way of harvesting rain water which may be used in arsenic affected areas

Bangladesh. Dr Richard Wilson of Har-

vard University, USA emphasised the need for preparing an international database. There are several reasons for the international community to be interested in arsenic contamination and its effects throughout the world. The first, most obvious and most important, reasons are to enable the world to decide upon measures to help the sufferers from arsenic poi soning, and to prevent further suffering, Wilson said.

He added that a subsidiary reason is to enable hydrologists to discover the way in which arsenic flows through the biosphere and to be able to avoid waters which contain high level of arsenic. Dr Richard Wilson said an-

other subsidiary reason is to enable the world to understand the mechanisms of arsenic poisoning.

Chanpen Choprapawon from the National Institute of Health, Department of Medical Sciences, Thailand said that several thousand people in Nakorn Srithammarat district in Thailand have been exposed to arsenic through contamination in surface groundwater for more than seven decades.

Choprapawon said during the years 1987 and 1988 chronic arsenic poisoning turned into a hot political issue producing lots of confusion in many sectors including the public, the media, government officers and NGOs. A lot of information, either correct or incorrect, was disseminated through the mass media and caused economic difficulty to the Ronpibool villagers.

It is recommended that more effort should be placed on social mobilisation and continuous action research in order to provide sufficient knowledge for the decision makers.

Razzak calls on Thapa

Nepal to help Bangladesh use its vast water resources

Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzag met Nepalese Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa in Kathmandu yesterday, reports BSS.

They discussed issues of bilateral interest. Razzak explained to Thapa

the possibilities of converting the huge water resources of Nepal into wealth, according to a message received in Dhaka. He said that the solution to

the problem of floods and droughts in the Ganges Basin countries lies in joint harnessing, development, management of the water resources of the Ganges.

The Nepalese Prime Minister assured the Bangladesh minister of support of his government for any future plan for use of the vast water resources of Nepal by Bangladesh. He expressed the hope that Bangladesh and Nepal would work together to develop their economy and Nepal would always work closely in every sector of economic development.

Occidental

From page 1

since January 6 and already 1200 metre drilling had been completed, a source requesting anonymity informed this afternoon.

The company has targeted to drill about 4000 metres in 90 days, said the source. Occidental is hoping that the primary gas layer would be available after drilling about 2000 to 2500 metres.

The company this time is taking extra care in drilling the well and as part of this, cementing is being done after every 100 metres, the source said.

The location is situated in the bank of the river Bibiana and it is about twelve kilometres off at Sherpur on the Dhaka-Sylhet Highway. There is no road-link with the location from the highway. Presently, the river route is the only means of communication to reach the site.

The approximate reserve of gas in the location would be about one trillion cubic feet, the source said quoting Occidentals seismic survey report. The Company officials are highly optimistic about the prospect of the Bibiana well, the source

However, none of the responsible officials in the Sylhet office of Occidental could be contacted even after repeated

Arms surrender a drama

From page 1 movement. He called upon the people to prepare themselves for a vigorous movement.

Referring to yesterday's gents at Khagrachhari, Mannan said it was a drama. In fact, new arms would be given to those who deposit their old arms.

Explaining, he said the pro-CHT.

Pointing to the appointment of Hasibur Rahman Swapan, an MP elected from Sirajganj on BNP ticket, as a deputy minister on Monday, Mannan said the heinous move was to hide the government's failure. He recalled that President Ershad had also inducted BNP leaders in his cabinet few days before his fall.

Acid thrown on schoolgirl

Hamida Begum, 15, a student of School.

unidentified young man hurled acid on her face at around 2:30 pm and disappeared soon. Hamida was taking part in

the thana health complex.

Rice import

"I am here for the last two days with my load of rice heading for Chittagong," said Abul Kashem, a trucker waiting at Nagarbari terminal. He is still one kilometer from the river.

traders from Pabna to Bogra reported crisis in rice supply.

half the normal," said Mojibur Rahman, a rice trader at Chaturhat, a roadside bazar in Santhia thana of Pabna, "I am selling BR-11 paddy at Tk 340 a maund. Last year, the same was sold for Tk 200 to 210."

Sathia and Bera thana had a unique problem this season to compound the crisis. A WAPDA embankment gave in during the monsoon and most rice fields of Bera thana and about half of Sathia were damaged by flood water.

Abdus Sattar, a rickshawpuller of Kayempur of Sirajganj, was sitting on his threewheeler in a gloomy mood.

But worst hit are the day labourers. "It was the season for work

in the rice fields. We were supposed to weed the Boro fields now," said Ali Mia, a day labourer of Burigani union of Bogra, "But I have no work now since the Boro seedlings were damaged in the cold weather. It is still two weeks to go before farmers once again to transplant seedlings. It means I will have hardly any work for another month. How will I survive till then?"

arms surrender by the insur-

posed regional council would give new arms after absorbing them in the police force for

Presided over by BNP city convenor Sadeq Hossain Khoka, the rally was also addressed, by Barrister Abdus

SAVAR, Feb 10: A schoolgirl sustained serious burn injures when a young man threw acid on her at Adharchandra High School here today, reports UNB. The victim was identified as

class ten of Savar Girls' High Police and witnesses said the

the Science and Technology Week '98 on the school premises. She was admitted to

From page 1 waiting for days to be ferried across the Jamuna. But slow movement of ferries due to heavy siltation is helping them a little.

Meanwhile, farmers and

"Rice supply in the market is

"I have to buy one kg of coarse rice at Tk 13 which I could buy for Tk 8.50 last year, said Sattar. "But my income has not increased a bit. Nobody is ready to pay me more for the price hike. Rather, people are becoming hard bargainers."

"Later, Shantu Larma It now seems that people would not mind slight increase in rice price provided they had employment. But with the crisis and more with the panic, nobody is ready to part with their money right now. Because they know, money is what can save them in a difficult situation.

Salam Talukder, Dr Khandaker Mosarraf Hossain, KM Obaidur Rahman, Fazlur Rahman Patal,

and Amanullah Aman. Sadek Hossain said the leaders and workers of BNP and its front organisations will not return home until the fall of this government. Salam Talukder said the so-

Mirza Abbas, Goyeshwar Roy,

Selima Rahman, Haris Chowd-

hury, Jainal Abedin Farooq

called peace accord was not with Santu Larma but with the Indian rulers as Sheikh Hasina had entered into a secret agreement with them. Dr Mosarraf alleged that the country's independence and

sovereignty have been surrendered to Santu Larma by signing the agreement. People have to be united to resist its implementation. :Later, a procession paraded

the Topkhana road, Purana Paltan, Kakrail crossing before terminating at Mouchhack at about 6:15 pm.

Think tank

From page 1 strategist Prof Rehman Sobhan. who is also the Executive Director of the CPD. The brainstorming meeting was supported by the UNDP.

The participants said that such a centre could be used to promote independent research and provide a region-wide perspective on issues of current and emerging concern to the re-

It was expected that interactive meetings and consultations would be held by the participants in other South Asian countries in order to explore the need and support for the idea of such a South Asian think tank.

The group of eminent scholars who attended the meeting included Rafeeuddin Ahmed. Associate Administrator. UNDP, Kazi Afzal Rahman, Regional Commissions, UNDP. Farooq Sobhan, Chairman, BOI, Dr Kinlay Dorjee, Executive Director, Royal Society for Protection of Nature, Bhutan, Prof Muchkund Dubey and Dr Arjun Sengupta from India, Ibrahim Hussain Zaki from Maldives, Yadav Kant Silwal from Nepal, Abdul Sattar and Syed Babar Ali from Pakistan and Dr Gamani Corea and Uswattearatchi from Sri

Lanka. Privatisation

From page 1 Factory and Atlas Bangladesh

Sale of three SOEs remained suspended due to court orders. The Nabarun Jute Mills Ltd at Narayanganj is awaiting approval of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs. Meanwhile, the Prime Min-

ister recently gave her consent

to private two SOE's out of 10

which were awaiting her approval for about four months. Their privatisation has been finalised by the PB and approved by Cabinet Committee. The two enterprises are the Can Making and Tin Printing Plant and the Dossa Extraction both in Chittagong. The PB will

now issue later of indent to

hand over the factories to the buyers, the source said. Can Making and Tin Printing has a liability of Tk 53 lakh. Its price has been estimated as Tk 2.13 crore. The liabilities would be taken over by the buyers. The Dossa Extraction has no liability. Its price

was estimated Tk 1.30 crore. The other 8 industries which are still awaiting the Prime Minister's approval are: Pylon Industries Ltd. Chittagong. Bangladesh Textile Mills Narayanganj, Fish Export Ltd, Khulna, Karim Jute Mills, Dhaka, Dhaka Cotton Mills, Dhaka, Khulna Textile Mills Ltd, Khulna, Kaliachapra Sugar Mills, Kishoreganj and Noakhali Textile Mills Ltd.

According to sources, the PM has sent back the file asking the PB to submit it again after separating the adjacent lands from the factory buildings of those industries.

Luxmipur.

Bangalees won't be forced out of CHT From page galees living in the Hill Tracts decided to set up a science and moved from our life for ever.

nomic development of the coun-

She said Chittagong Hill

Hasina said the long period of instability in the Hill Tracts would come to an end with the return of the PCJSS members to their normal life.

Tracts has a long history of peaceful coexistence of tribals and non-tribals. "I hope that this tradition will continue and there would be no recurrence of the sad past." The Prime Minister said her government is committed to restore peace and normalcy and

ensure security of life and prop-

erty of the people. "Let us reap

the full dividends by making it lasting." About the constitutional aspect of the CHT peace accord, she said the agreement has been signed with full allegiance to sovereignty, territorial integrity and the Constitution of Bangladesh.

"There should not be any

Hasina clearly said the

misunderstanding, confusion

rights of all tribals and Ban-

and uncertainty about it."

region have been ensured as

The Deputy Commissioners, SPs and other officers and staff will remain in three hill districts like in the past, she said, adding that the Bangalees would continue to remain in their own lands as the legitimate inhabitants of the Cluster Villages. 'We would take steps to rehabilitate them side by side with members of the Jana Sanghati Samity."

About the repatriation of tribals from Tripura refugee camps, Hasina said 37,996 members of 7,267 refugee families have already returned home. She mentioned the package of 20 incentives for the repatriated refugees.

The Prime Minister thanked the Indian government for its cooperation in repatriation of the refugees. "I hope the repatriation of refugees from India would be

completed within next few days

and there would be an end to

their miserable life as

refugees...With this, the words

tribal refugees " would be re-

Responding to the opposition to the peace deal. Hasina regretted that "BNP and a few parties are trying to create unrest in the country to misguide the people with wrong and incorrect information. They have been trying to create unrest in the country, including the Chittagong Hill Tracts." She called upon the opposi-

Hasina said the whole nation acclaimed this as a Peace Accord because it was signed for restoration of peace in the CHT. The world community as well as the entire nation, including the tribals and non-tribals, excepting a few self-seekers, wel-

massive development programme in the CHT, including immediate, short, medium and long-term plans, she said, adding that a total of Tk 2149.17 crore will be spent for implementation of these plans in phases.

The government has also

tion to join peace process with non-tribals to come forward for the government leaving aside the development of the country the "path of anarchism." and the people, she said," Let us

comed the agreement. The government has taken a

technology university in the hill tracts. "We have been encouraging the private entrepreneurs to play an effective role in the economic development of the

area," she added. Hasina said steps have been taken for enrichment of culture of the different tribals in the hill tracts. Calling upon all tribals and

take a fresh vow to build 'Sonar

Bangla' as dreamt by father of

the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Ministers, MPs, political leaders, a good number of diplomats, tribal and nontribal people were present at the ceremony.

handed over an arms to the Prime Minister as the symbol of arms surrender. He was followed by 739 Shantibahinimen who were sitting in the middle of the stadium. They surrendered their arms one by one amidst clappings and cheers by the crowd.