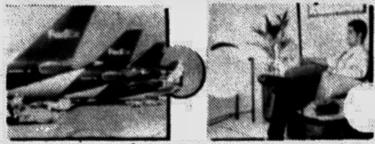


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PHILIPS

Law & order in Ctg reviewed Curb terrorism and extortion: PM

CHITTAGONG, Feb 15: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today asked the law enforcing agencies to take stern action against those who are out to destroy peace and stability in society, reports UNB.

"Terrorists have no party or political identity, take stringent action against them whoever they may be," she said at a meeting on law and order at the local circuit house this afternoon.

She said economic development of the country is not possible without ensuring law and order and peace. The main target of the present government is rapid economic growth by ensuring a peaceful atmosphere, she added.

The PM instructed the local administration and law enforcement agencies to take appropriate action to curb terrorism and extortion. "Do not give any protection to the terrorists."

"You should remain alert so that none can take law in his own hand," Hasina said. She also said that steps should be taken to give chances for the terrorists to come back to normal and such an environment should be created.

Those who want to come back to normal life should be given training and be treated psychologically, she added.

The prime minister said government will give its full support to any initiative to destroy the den of terrorists. "Swift information is needed for prompt action."

She directed the local administration and police to take proper action to keep the operation of port normal and maintain a congenial atmosphere in the EPZs for their uninterrupted normal operation.

Hasina said the government has taken necessary steps for further development of the city, including the improvement of the local port and airport.

Home Minister Maj (ret'd) Rafiqul Islam also addressed the meeting, attended among others, by Civil Aviation Minister Engineer Mosharraf Hossain, Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan, Minister Kalpa Ranjan Chakma and Chittagong City Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury.

Later, she also addressed leaders and workers of the City Awami League at the Circuit House.

What's up AL's sleeves?

From page 1
Pirring for ministerial positions since long, resent this special status given to a deserter. But, at the same time, it would obviously act as an allure for some other BNP legislators to stage defections, jeopardising the very objective of Article 70 of the Constitution—a provision which was adopted unanimously by the AL and BNP members in the Fifth Parliament to stop floor crossing by the MPs.

However, given the acrimonious working relation between the chiefs of ruling Awami League and opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party, the incident is bound to further erode the Treasury Bench-Opposition relation. Anyone having the minimum idea of the nature of the country's present political culture understands that the irritation would actively contribute to the erosion of whatever progress the AL-BNP negotiators had made, until February 9 last, on the late-

Arms surrender

From page 1
Samity, the political umbrella of the Shantibahini, Sudhasindhu Khisa and Roktoupul Tripura will also attend the function.

Meanwhile, NCCHT member Dipankar Talukdar MP and Bir Bahadur MP coordinated the last minute preparations today for the arms depositing ceremony. The Shantibahinim who will lay down their arms already reached here.

The first phase of arms surrender took place on February 10 when PCJSS leader Joytirinda Bodhipriyo Larma alias Shantu Larma led 739 of his arms cadre in depositing their arms and ammunition saying farewell to a two-decade-old bush war.

The third phase of arms surrender will be held at Dighinala on February 22 and the fourth and last one at frontier Dudukchhari on February 28.

ICC chief

From page 1
leaders at Sonargaon Hotel on the Trade and Investment situation as well as ICC role in the promotion of Free Trade. ICC Bangladesh and Nestle Bangladesh Ltd will jointly host a reception in honour of Maucher at Hotel Sheraton.

In the evening, Chairman of Nestle Bangladesh Latifur Rahman who is also Vice President of ICC Bangladesh will host a dinner in honour of Maucher.

Besides he will meet Nestle Bangladesh Management Committee and explore further investment opportunity in the region.

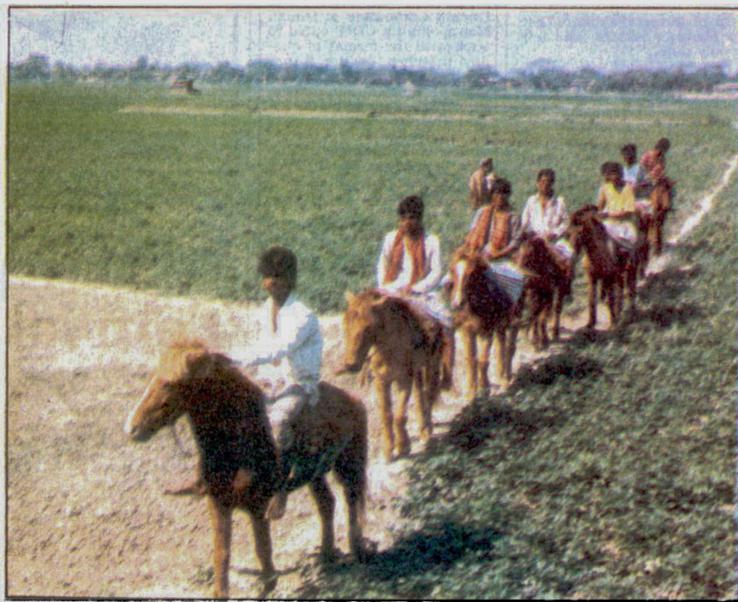
Maucher took over the Presidency of International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) in January 1997 having its headquarters in Paris, the only authoritative spokesman of World Business Community with its affiliation with WTO and the UN System. In fact, he played a significant role in developing a partnership between ICC, WTO and UN System, the ICC office in Dhaka said.

Nestle Bangladesh Limited is a joint venture between Transcom Limited and Nestle SA, Switzerland with an investment of Tk 80 crore. The company is exploring options for expansion.

Maucher will leave Dhaka Wednesday morning.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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Horses carry loads in Munshiganj, where they are useful in negotiating dirt roads. — Star photo by A K M Mohsin

Trader shot dead in Chittagong

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Feb 15: Unidentified gunmen shot dead a businessman at Reazuddin bazar in the city last night.

The dead was identified as Abdul Mabud, 22, who was a poultry trader at Reazuddin bazar, police said.

The gunmen stormed into his shop and fired on him at around 10 pm. Mabud and another person Abdul Kader, received bullet wounds. Mabud later died on way to the hospital.

Police arrested two persons in this connection.

The attack was made as Mabud declined to pay large sum of tolls demanded by the terrorists, local people said.

Book Fair

From page 1
schedule for opening and closure of the fair.

"It is true that we are not used to such practices during the fair," said one Patal, a visitor, adding "but discipline is also required for organising these programmes."

Putul, a student of International Relations of Dhaka University, claimed to be a regular visitor to the Mela for the past few years, pointed out "probably because of the strict measures taken by the authorities incidents of eve teasing and other nuisances are less this time around."

Some unruly elements for the past few years, taking advantage of the liberal attitude of the authorities, had tried to undermine the character of the book fair which is associated with the Language Movement of 1952.

The solemn occasion had occasionally been trampled by these elements who always harassed women and the book-sellers.

This year no major incidents of violence or eve teasing was recorded barring an incident of violence at the canteen in the Academy premises Wednesday night after the fair-hour was over.

There is, however, opposing views regarding the idea of reducing the festivity of the fair. This section also expressed resentments and criticised the decision of the Bangla Academy to limit the fair within the academy premises.

Muggers snatch Tk four lakh, one arrested

By Staff Correspondent

Muggers snatched Tk four lakh from a businessman on Satmasjid Road under Dhanmondi thana in the city yesterday.

Police said a gang of about five snatchers attacked Mohammad Rameez and his two associates in front of an Uttara Bank branch at about 11 am. A car trader, Rameez resides in the city's Sahajapur area.

Rameez and his companions were attacked when leaving the bank after drawing the amount. The money was being carried in two hand bags.

The muggers engaged in a scuffle with Rameez after he declined to hand over the bags containing the money. At one stage, the gang members stabbed Rameez in his hand and snatched the bags. Local people

Teenage boy shot dead in city

By Staff Correspondent

A teenage boy was gunned down at a slum behind the Orthopedic Hospital under Tejgaon thana in the city late Saturday night.

Police said the dead was identified as Ripon, son of Nezamul Huq, a resident of the slum. The real motive behind the killing could not be known immediately.

A gang of about four persons called Ripon out of one of his friends' house where he was gossiping along with some of his friends at about 9:30 pm, police said.

They led Ripon to the other end of the slum. There Ripon had an altercation with the gang members and at one stage they shot Ripon from a point-blank range, police said.

Ripon was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the on-duty doctors declared him dead. Police handed over his body to his family yesterday after autopsy at the DMCH morgue.

None was arrested in connection with the murder till filing of this report. Akter Hossain, brother of the victim, lodged a case with Tejgaon thana in this regard.

rushed to the scene after Rameez cried out for help.

But the muggers exploded several crackers and four of them managed to flee on board an auto-rickshaw. However, one of the attackers, identified as Selim, 25, failed to board the three-wheeler and was caught by the local people.

Dhanmondi police rescued the alleged mugger who sustained serious injuries due to the mass beating. Police arrested Selim and took him to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital for treatment.

Police said they recovered from Selim one of the snatched bags containing Tk 80,000.

Dhanmondi police were raiding different parts of the city following the statement of the arrested person. A case was lodged with Dhanmondi thana in this regard.

AL observes 'democracy killing day'

Leader of ruling Awami League yesterday accused the opposition BNP of hatching conspiracy to block the development process of the country, reports UNB.

Addressing a discussion meeting, the ruling party leader also criticised BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia for her 'non-political' attitude towards different national issues.

City unit of Awami League organised the meeting in observance of 'Democracy Killing Day' at Ramna Botanical, marking the February 15, 1996 'farical' election.

The leaders described the February 15 as a black chapter of the country's history of democracy and said the BNP, which was born through conspiracy, does not believe in democracy and is still conspiring to destroy the hard-earned democracy.

Speaking on the occasion, LGRD Minister Zillur Rahman recalled the February 15 election and said when all parties had boycotted the farical election, Begum Zia alone went for the polls to hang on to power, but the people forced her to quit.

Bill seeking one third reserved Poura seats for women

By Staff Correspondent

Local Government and Rural Development Minister Zillur Rahman yesterday moved an amendment bill seeking to provide for one-third reserved seats for women in Pourashavas of the country.

The bill also sought provisions for appointment of an administrator for each Pourashava on expiry of its term. According to the proposed amendment, the administrators will be appointed by the government and they will work until the first meeting of the next elected bodies of the Pourashavas.

If the proposed legislation is adopted by Jatuya Sangsad, one-third members of a Pourashava will be women elected directly by the women. This provision, however, will not prevent any woman from contesting election for any seat other than the reserved ones.

Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid, who presided over the entire sitting yesterday, disposed of a call attention notice on the country's sugar industries. Industries and Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed assured the House that he would constitute a Task Force to identify

problems of the sugar industry as well as the sugarcane producers. "The government would take steps on the recommendations of the Task Force," he said. The call attention notice was given by Awami League legislator Shamshur Rahman Sharif.

The House also witnessed general discussion on the address by President Shahabuddin Ahmed on the opening day of the current session. Hafez Ruhul Amin Madani of AL and Golam Mohamad Quader of Jatuya Party took part in the discussion.

The AL legislator appreciated Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's success in signing the Chittagong Hill Tracts peace treaty. The JP lawmaker said

From page 1
of Bangladesh for his extradition.

Saiful Islam, Secretary General of Bangladesh Human Rights Commission, as petitioner filed the writ petition with a prayer for issuance of a rule nisi calling upon the government to show cause as to why the extradition/handing over of Anup Chetia should not be stayed.

It was stated in the petition that Anup Chetia is a freedom fighter struggling to ensure the right to self-determination of the Assamese people.

Dr. Akter Hamid, appearing for the writ petitioner, submitted that the government has no authority to hand over Anup Chetia to the Indian authorities in absence of any extradition treaty which will be violative of Article 145 A of the Constitution.

Attorney General KS Nabi, opposing the petition, submitted that the petition is premature, speculative and not maintainable as no such decision for deportation of Anup Chetia has yet been taken by the government.

"The petition is not maintainable since the petitioner as Secretary General of Human Rights Commission has no locus standi to file the petition," he submitted.

He further submitted that under the Extradition Act the government, if it considers expedient, can extradite any person to his respective country like India with which there is no extradition treaty, by an administrative order and no court can interfere in that administrative order.

Beximco

From page 1
stand to lose their directorships of the bank.

The AB Bank warning came after the four companies — Sathkira Fisheries, Pharmatek Chemicals, Khulna Fisheries, and Mrittika Ltd — had defaulted to repay their installment of Tk 12.72 cr due on December 30.

Later, these companies having their loans guaranteed by the Beximco Group, sought extension for their repayment date till January 30. But they defaulted again.

According to the loan rescheduling terms, they are liable to repay the entire amount at a time if they fail.

This is not the first time that these companies had defaulted in their payments. In June 1997, they had also defaulted by submitting a post-dated cheque. However, the defaulted amount was later adjusted.

The central bank detected the defaulted loans of these four companies. Later, the Beximco Group came forward to stand as guarantor for the loans amounting to Tk 90 cr.

Speaker: Legal status

From page 1

argued that Swapan's joining the government violating the party discipline was deemed to be resignation by him from his own party. Resignation by an MP from the party that nominated him in the election leads to the vacation of his seat in the parliament, according to Article 70 of the Constitution.

Other than disposing of the issue by himself, said the Speaker, he had also two other options — forwarding Swapan's case to the Election Commission or send it to the President for taking opinion of the Supreme Court.

In this context, he said, he would "seriously consider" the suggestion by former Speaker Shah Razzak Ali who told the Daily Star on Wednesday: "If there is any violation of Article 70 of the Constitution in future, in this regard, BNP will bring it to the notice of the Speaker who, according to law, will communicate the issue to the Election Commission."

Yet, there are some more options, he said, without elaborating. The Speaker termed the current legal examination by his office as a primary step and said before going for other options the issue of Swapan's Sangsad membership would be

that some provisions of the treaty might have gone against some provisions of the Constitution.

The Deputy Speaker announced in the House that there would be no sitting of parliament today so that MPs willing to take part in the Akheri Munajat of the Biswa Jtama can do so.

The sitting was adjourned at 2:50 pm to resume at 11 am tomorrow.

IIT students begin indefinite strike

GAZIPUR, Feb 15: Students of Islamic Institute of Technology (IIT) today enforced an indefinite strike in the institute to realise their 14-point demand, reports UNB.

The students also locked up the IIT main gate, preventing its Director General and teachers from attending their offices today.

Their demands included, immediate solution to their accommodation problem, sufficient books in the library, treatment facilities and industrial training programmes and extension of their course from three months to four-and-a-half months.

The students also accused the DG of refusing to receive their memorandum in this regard.

NBR chairman

From page 1

utes of heated discussions on the issue over telephone, the sources said.

In addition, the same minister had insisted that the chairman offer a job to a certain person whose eligibility was a matter of dispute before the court. The NBR chairman reasoned that giving employment to the person would set a very bad precedence which may oblige the government to give jobs to many others with similar eligibility problem.

This reasoning of the chairman reportedly angered the minister.

All these incidents had demoralised the NBR chairman and he resigned under pressure, the sources said.

Hannan Shah was also under pressure from different quarters because of revenue shortfall. Till January, there was a Tk 700 crore shortfall in revenue collection.

UNB adds: When contacted, Finance Minister SAMS Kibria told UNB last night that Shah Hannan had relinquished his charge under "mutual understanding".

Kibria said Shah Hannan's term had almost ended and he also expressed his desire to him that he would like to be relieved of his responsibility.

Besides, the Finance Minister said since the national budget process has to begin now and it would be inappropriate to grant him leave in the middle of the budget process.

The Finance Minister ruled out as "baseless" that Shah Hannan had given up the job under pressure from any quarter or following a dispute with any individual.

Out Staff Correspondent from Chittagong adds: Several hundred officers and employees at Chittagong Customs House yesterday staged a demonstration protesting what they said 'forced' retirement of the NBR chairman.

The demonstrators demanded reinstatement of the NBR chairman, customs sources added. They also announced to hold a protest rally at 11 am today at the Customs House premises.

India goes to polls from today

From page 1

constituents of the 14-party ruling United Front in some states while some other states will witness a triangular contest between BJP, Congress and Front constituents. Political analysts say BJP might gain in key states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, which together account for 139 seats, because of the United Front constituents' failure to work out seat-adjustment.

Both Congress and BJP have made stable government as their main election plank saying 18 months of United Front rule since June 1996 has only produced political and economic instability that tended to push the country towards chaos. The Front, on the other hand, insisted coalition government was necessary in pluralistic country like India. BJP has accused Congress of being mother of corruption while the party itself came under fire from Congress and United Front for allegedly trying to divide the country along religious lines. BJP's reply to the charge was that while all other parties treated Muslims as vote banks it considered them as citizens of India.

The campaign has been lackluster because of restrictions imposed by the Election Commission but gained in charisma and stature with Sonia Gandhi of Congress and Atal Behari Va-

jpaye of BJP air-hopping from place to place to address over 100 rallies between the two of them. The leaders of United Front, including Gujral, Gowda and West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu concentrated only their respective stronghold, instead of going round the country. Gujral, contesting from Jalandhar constituency in Punjab as a Janata Dal candidate with the backing of the state's ruling Akali Dal, an ally of BJP, had not moved out of his constituency for electioneering.

Sonia Gandhi's emergence from long hibernation and plunging headlong into campaigning has undoubtedly boosted the sagging morale of Congress after a series of opinion polls had initially predicted the party would finish way behind the front-runner BJP and ranking leaders in a split in the party's units in some states.

As Sonia Gandhi, flanked by her daughter Priyanka and son Rahul, addressed one rally after another drawing impressive turnout in different parts of the country, Congress' rating in opinion polls also soared. The latest poll conducted on behalf of leading 'India Today' magazine and released a couple of days ago said Congress would get 164 seats, United Front 127 while BJP and its allies would secure 214. An earlier opinion

poll last week had said Congress may get 172, United Front 118 and BJP and its allies 231.

BJP, always the front-runner in opinion polls, once again relied heavily on the oratorical skills of Vajpayee and its president L K Advani in the electioneering besides the glamour of some filmstars. But the party has been worried by the crowd at Sonia Gandhi's election meetings and Vajpayee and Advani openly acknowledged that she would help Congress get a few more seats though her presence would not alter the scenario substantially.

A measure of BJP's worry about Sonia factor could be observed from the party's manifesto which said the elections offered a choice between national and a 'foreign' hand being the 'foreign' hand being an unnamed but obvious reference to Sonia Gandhi. Moreover, Advani himself admitted recently that there was a move within his party to include in the manifesto a proposal to amend the Constitution barring an Indian of foreign origin from becoming the country's Prime Minister. The party, however, dropped the idea, he said.

The election campaign has been by and large peaceful except in Tamil Nadu, where 47 people have been killed in a se-

ries of bomb blasts since yesterday (and one bomb went off very near the venue of an election meeting where Advani was scheduled to speak). In Tripura, 26 people including seven security personnel died and in Assam a CPI (ML) candidate was shot dead.

Banned insurgents outfit ULFA in Assam and National Liberation Front of Tripura have given call for poll boycott prompting the authorities to deploy additional army and paramilitary troops in those two states to ensure peaceful balloting. Shoot-a-sight has been ordered in 34 constituencies of Bihar state where there are a total of 54 parliamentary seats, to prevent possible outbreak of violence.

Reuters adds: Six suspected militants were blown up by their own bomb during a police raid in the southern Indian city of Coimbatore early today.

The authorities in the state of Tamil Nadu sent troops into Coimbatore, declared a curfew, banned gatherings of more than five people and ordered police to shoot rioters on sight.

More than 100,000 paramilitary troops joined local police in 222 constituencies across 15 states and five federally ruled territories as part of efforts to ensure a free and fair start to the polling, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said.

argued that Swapan's joining the government violating the party discipline was deemed to be resignation by him from his own party. Resignation by an MP from the party that nominated him in the election leads to the vacation of his seat in the parliament, according to Article 70 of the Constitution.

Other than disposing of the issue by himself, said the Speaker, he had also two other options — forwarding Swapan's case to the Election Commission or send it to the President for taking opinion of the Supreme Court.

In this context, he said, he would "seriously consider" the suggestion by former Speaker Shah Razzak Ali who told the Daily Star on Wednesday: "If there is any violation of Article 70 of the Constitution in future, in this regard, BNP will bring it to the notice of the Speaker who, according to law, will communicate the issue to the Election Commission."

Yet, there are some more options, he said, without elaborating. The Speaker termed the current legal examination by his office as a primary step and said before going for other options the issue of Swapan's Sangsad membership would be

discussed at a "higher level" in the parliament.

Quoting the BNP letter, Humayun Rashid Chowdhury explained he will have to examine the matter before sending it to the Election Commission as the Opposition party had requested him to vacate the seat of the former BNP leader.

Asked on fresh allotment of seats in the House to the deputy minister, the Speaker said the minister would continue with his previously-allotted seat in the Opposition bench, unless he received an application for his new seat. Until yesterday, he said he did not get any such application.

"Why should I be curious of his return to the House?" the Speaker said when asked why the deputy minister was abstaining from attending the Sangsad session. "He and many others are also abstaining...I expect all of them to return," he said.

Replying to another question, the Speaker said he did not get any response to his earlier offer for mediating a dialogue between the ruling party and the Opposition.

He also denied having any problem with allotment of a fresh seat to the Deputy Minister for Industries, as reported in a section of the press.