OF DIFFERENT TYPES.

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#### Jamuna Bridge to open on schedule in June

By Staff Correspondent The 940 million US dollar Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge (JMB) is expected to be opened as per schedule in June this year, Communications Minister Anwar Hossain Manju told a group of journalists at his office yesterday while briefing about the progress of construction See Page 12 Col 5

#### TOMORROW

Rapid and unhindered advancement of Information Technology is the answer to all global woes - that is the general outlook of the 90s. While the rest of the world may have other options but for Bangladesh, that just about sums up the future. But in order for us to take advantage of the situation, we need to take swift and appropriate action. Question is - are we? Read the Star Weekend Magazine's cover story this week on the prospect of IT

### Inside Today -

in Bangladesh

Article PM's meeting with

Editors-I We Should Do

Some Home Work before Meeting the PM by Mahfuz Anam

#### Supplement

Page 4

A two-page supplement on 'Real Estate' on Pages 8 & 9

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# Probe committee report on Magurchhara explosion

# Design flaws in drilling mainreason

By Mizan Ali

Design flaws in drilling and cementation have been identified as the main reasons for the explosion at Magurchhara exploration site in June last.

This was revealed in a report by the six-member inquiry committee, formed to probe the causes of the blow-out. submitted to the government in September last, sources close to the committee said yesterday.

"The Magurchhara blow-out is an incident and not an accident," one source said categorically and added that under the terms and conditions of the Production Sharing Contract. "the operating company is responsible for meeting the costs for the blow-out."

"Data of the drilling pro-gramme recorded 24 hours before the blow -out suggested flaws in the drilling and cementation design," the source said

quoting the inquiry report.

A group of geologists from the Dhaka University who also visited the site following the incident observed that "the incident took place due to human

Identifying 15 causes for the Magurchhara blow-out, the probe body also noted that the sub-surface water in areas adjacent to the Magurchhara exploration site had been contam-

"The ground water of that area was now unsuitable for drinking or irrigation," said the source quoting the report.

Gas leakage through many points near the damaged well continues even now and the bubbling of gas through some points was clearly visible. claimed witnesses.

The inquiry committee formed on June 16, the day after the explosion, also sug-gested an extensive survey of the sub-surface water in the region to detect the extent of contamination.

Magurchhara exploration site under Kamalganj thana of Moulvibazar district was contracted out to US company Occidental in January 1995.

The explosion occurred in the early hours of June 15 last and the flame rose upto 600 to 800 feet. The fire was doused re-

"The Report on Magurchhara blow-out Incident", containing about 200 pages ,was finalised by the inquiry committee within two and a half months of its formation but it is yet to be made public.

Jim Conors, drilling manager (international), who came from the Occidental headquarters, represented the company in the inquiry committee and remained present during the probe and compilation of the

The committee formed with joint secretary, Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, as its chairman included TIS Khan Lodhi, Director (Operation) Petrobangla; SR Ósamani Managing Director BAPEX; Dr M Ismail, Managing Director, BGFCL and the Deputy Com-missioner of Moulvibazar as its

See Page 12 Col 8

A fire gutted a slum at Rayer Bazar in the city yesterday.(Inset) A slum dweller wailing.

- Star photo

#### Task Force recommendations

## Ban TUs to restore discipline in banking sector

Star Report

The Task Force on Trade Unions (TUs) in the Banking Sector has recommended a complete ban on the formation and activities of TUs in all scheduled banks of the country

The Task Force report submitted to the Finance Minister on Thursday feels that banning TU activities can revive discipline in the banking sector and will help check corruption and quicken reforms in the banks. However, the Task Force has also put down a set of 'alterna-

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tive' proposals aiming at con-trolling the activities of the TUs in case 'insurmountable' obstacles hinder implementation of

of the alternative proposals, the Task Force felt, TU activities in the banks have to be temporarily suspended for at least three years because the current state of TU affairs would make it difficult to implement these recommendations. This suspen-

NATORE, Feb 24: Card phone

booths are being abused in the

16 northern districts including

Natore by some unscrupulous

telephone traders in collusion

with a section of BTTB employ-

ees, compelling the card phone

users to pay more but causing huge revenue loss to the gov-

The dishonest BTTB em-

ployees create artificial crisis

At least 12 people were in-

jured in a clash with police yes-

terday when JCD activists

marched towards the BTV Bha-

ban in a bid to gherao the state-

run television building for,

what they said, telecasting lies. Police also arrested at least

five JCD activists as proces-

sionists ran desperately to es-

cape from police tear gas and lathi charge at a police barri-

cessionists from different col-

leges started to arrive at the

Siddheswari Boys' High School

ground, near the Mouchak in-

tersection, with banners and

BTV is telling the people about

what had happened on the 21

February," said Sajal, a BA first

year Economics student of Ja-

"We want to protest the lies

placards.

Since 11 am some 3,000 pro-

cade on Rampura DIT Avenue.

ernment.

commitment of the government is a must for the effort to be successful and that the implementation of the process must be supervised from the high level of the government.

The Task Force was set up on

Card phone booths being

abused in 16 N districts

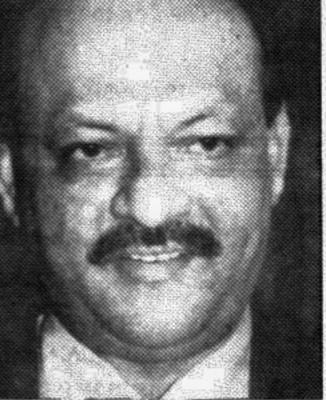
From M A Ali

JCD march towards BTV Bhaban

Clash with police:

12 hurt, 5 arrested

By Staff Correspondent



Mostafa Golam Quddus

#### Parishad panel sweeps **BGMEA** polls

The Sammilita Parishad panel led by incumbent BGMEA president Mostafa Golam Qud-dus swept the Association's election yesterday, reports

The Quddus-led panel won bagging all the nine posts for members against the Forum panel of Anisul Huq. With the winning of Sam-

milita panel, Golam Quddus will retain his chair for another

The elected members are: Kazi Maniruzzaman, Iqbal Ahmed, Tipu Munshi, M Shahadat Hossain, M Nurul Islam, See Page 12 Col 5

#### School teacher shot dead in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Feb 25: Armed terrorists shot dead a school teacher at Banikpara Road in Lohagara thana, 30 miles off the city last night, po-

Ridoy Ranjan Dhar, 50, headmaster of Amirabad Jonokalyan High School, came under attack by armed terrorists on his way back home from Amirabad Bazar at around 8 pm. police said. The terrorists

Chetia's extradition

See Page 12 Col 4

#### SC to hear appeal today

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court takes up a petition concerning ULFA leader Anup Chetia for hearing today, reports UNB. Bangladesh Human Rights

Commission (BHRC) filed the petition yesterday challenging the High Court's rejection of a writ petition against the reported move of the government to hand over Chetia to Indian See Page 12 Col 7

#### the sector as an emergency service sector. It has also said full political

the ban on TUs. But even for implementation

sion can be enacted declaring

July 29, 1997 under the chairmanship of Khandoker Ibrahim Khaled, Deputy Governor of the Bangladesh Bank See Page 12 Col 5

and sell phone cards at higher

rates on one hand and encour-

age card phone users to make

distant calls at cheaper rates

from some selected phone

booths on the other hand, it was

being sold at Tk 105 to Tk 120

against the fixed price of Tk

100. They charge Tk 220 and Tk

governments have patronised BTV and used it for propaganda.

swell, two BNP leaders - Sadek

Hossain Khoka MP and Aman-

ullah Aman MP - were seen ad-

sionists started to march to-

wards Rampura. The usual traf-

fic congestion of Mouchak intersection instantly turned into

a nightmare. All sorts of vehi-

cles piled up on every direction

as about 20 riot policemen

walked in front of the proces-

slogans condemning the BTV

coverage. They also carried sev-

eral TV like boxes with signs

march was hardly 200 yards

short of its destination, riot po-

licemen in two files stood firm

See Page 12 Col 4

As the two kilometre-long

reading AL TV.

The processionists chanted

At around noon, the proces-

dressing the students.

As the assembly started to

See Page 12 Col 6

A 50 unit phone card is now

#### BNP may opt to join current JS session Mohammad Alauddin and Ha-

Amidst a changed political scenario in the BNP camp, the party's think-tank may change their mind in favour of returning to Parliament which will reassemble on Saturday, reports UNB. A final decision on the cru-

cial point is expected to be taken at the adjourned meeting of the BNP parliamentary party that resumes on Saturday. The BNP parliamentary

party began its emergency meet-ing on February 20, the day Begum Khaleda Zia returned from Saudi Arabia after a medical check-up.

It discussed the situation caused by the highly controversial action of two BNP MPs Dr

sibur Rahman Swapan, who joined the government as State Minister and Deputy Minister respectively. BNP insiders told UNB that the situation may soon take a

dramatic turn with the main opposition party opting to join the House, abandoning its decision of abstention. They said that in the given context, the BNP parliamentary party is possibly going to sug-

gest a decisive action when it resumes on Saturday. An influential BNP law-

maker, Barrister Ziaur Rahman Khan said, "We may return to the House even leaving our See Page 12 Col 1

#### Toxic waste polluting vast wet lands in Gazipur

By Morshed Ali Khan

Vast wet lands and water bodies surrounding the BSCIC industrial zone at Konabari in Gazipur are being polluted by toxic waste released by the 86 industrial units in the zone, according to a report of the Department of Environment

The vast wet lands are rapidly becoming barren. The DOE report said, once rich in pisciculture, these wet lands,

canals and rivers do not have any fish left due to the serious pollution caused by the industries. More industrial units will go into operation in the industrial zone of the Bangladesh Small and Collage Industries

The untreated industrial waste is finding its way to the surrounding areas, water bodies and vast agricultural lands. See Page 12 Col 4

#### 3 burnt alive, 500 shanties gutted in city

By Staff Correspondent

At least three persons - two women and a child-were burnt alive and 30 people injured as a devastating fire razed through a slum at Rayer Bazaar in the city yesterday afternoon.

Police identified two of the dead as Shumi, 3, and Anwara Begum, 50. The other woman

could not be identified as the body was charred. The fire gutted about 500 shanties, leaving several thousand people of the Poolpar slum

homeless. The cause of the fire could not be known. At least 200 other huts in the

slum were damaged as fire See Page 12 Col 1

#### Correction In our news item headlined

"PM, ministers, AL leaders meet briefly" published yesterday, it was mentioned inaccurately that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and senior AL leaders attended the 'Akika' ceremony of the grandson of Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed.

The event in Tofael Ahmed's house was not an Akika ceremony but a social get-together of Awami League leaders which the Prime Minister also attended.

# BANK'S

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TODAY 26TH FEBRUARY 1998

BANK LIMITED BANK a new generation bank

# gannath University College. Sa-jal, however, said all successive 'Delay in finalising bids may affect interest of int'l oil cos'

The British Deputy High Commissioner yesterday said that delay in finalising the sec-ond round block bidding for oil and gas exploration in Bangladesh may affect the interest the international oil companies took to invest in the

country's energy sector.
"We have been patiently watching (the outcome of the block bidding)," said Miriam McIntosh at a press conference yesterday on the visit of the British Trade Mission on Gas Sector.

"The outcome of the bids, as

promised by Bangladesh at the London and Houston Roundta-

bles last year, was supposed to

nett, and its member Safi Batli, Mary Brett of the Society of British Gas Industries and

David Burton of the Department of Trade and Industries, UK, the Deputy High Commis-sioner said, "However, those who have participated in the second round bid may not lose their interest, but the delay will discourage other companies, not just British companies but all others, which have taken

"Bangladesh should get the decisions right to attract more foreign companies", she added. The trade mission which

and in gas-based industries.

Focusing on large-scale investment in the country's gas sector, specially by oil giant Shell and its partner Cairn, Miriam McIntosh said that billion dellar investment in lion dollar investment in

# By Staff Correspondent

gradually delayed. We had hoped that the results would be declared long ago." In presence of chief of the trade mission, Malcolm Ben-

came to Bangladesh on a six day visit on Saturday, found tremendous prospect for investment and involvement in the country's gas sector cover-ing exploration to distribution

See Page 12 Col 6

#### interest to work in be announced on August 15 last year," she said. "It has been Bangladesh.