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## Suspected rapist of minor girl arrested

By Staff Correspondent  
CID investigators arrested a young man from Faridpur early yesterday on charge of raping the six-year-old girl in the police control room at the CMM's Court building in the city on March 10.

Obayedul Matbar alias Mora, 25, was brought to Dhaka and produced in the CMM's Court the same day. He was placed on a three-day CID remand for further interrogation.

He used to stay in the court area in the old city and do some small jobs like sweeping and cleaning there for quite some time, CID sources said.

A special CID team arrested Obayedul, son of Sayeed Matbar, from his village home at Narayanpur in Nagarkanda thana of Faridpur at about 3 am yesterday.

Father of two daughters, Obayedul confessed to police that he had raped the girl, Maria, (not her real name) in a toilet of the police control room.

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## Legal process delays BB drive to remove defaulting directors

The central bank's drive to remove defaulting directors from banks may become ineffective as the process to decide whether it was legal or illegal is taking a long time.

A large section of the defaulting bank directors have obtained court orders staying the removal process. Such stay orders sometimes continue for years due to backlog of cases in the courts.

The court procedures have taken such a lengthy detour that in some cases the Bangladesh Bank's (BB) penalty under Section 46 of the Bank Company Act (BCA) is about to become invalid even if it is finally affirmed by the courts.

The stay orders, in some cases discharged by the High Court, had been renewed by the Appellate Division and the time was later extended.

The BB had served notices on 112 directors of different

private banks under Section 17 of the Banking Companies Act, 1991, asking them to repay their defaulting loans or lose their directorships, according to central bank sources.

Five or six of these directors had either repaid their full loan amount or 'adjusted' loans, 12 had either resigned voluntarily or lost their directorship, and the deadline for expiry of notice is yet to become effective in case of nine directors.

But about one fourth of the total number of directors, 35, had obtained stay order of the central bank's notice or removal order.

This has left the whole process of cleaning the financial system almost ineffective, central bank sources said.

The BB had served removal order for three years under Section 46 of BCA on a director of Pubali Bank, Shaif A Chowdhury, on August 19, 1995. But he

obtained a stay order on September 11, 1995 from the High Court, according to the BB.

Since then, the case has been pending with the HC for about two and a half years. If the status quo continues for another six months, the central bank's removal order for three years will become automatically invalid.

Another director of City Bank, Ibrahim Mia was served with a same type of removal notice on May 5, 1996. He obtained a stay order from court on May 12, 1996 and the case has been pending for more than one year and nine months.

In the latest case, showcause notices were served on two directors of IFIC Bank, Salman Rahman and Sohel Rahman, under Section 17 of BCA on February 12, 1998. Both of them obtained stay orders four days later, on February 16, for ten weeks.

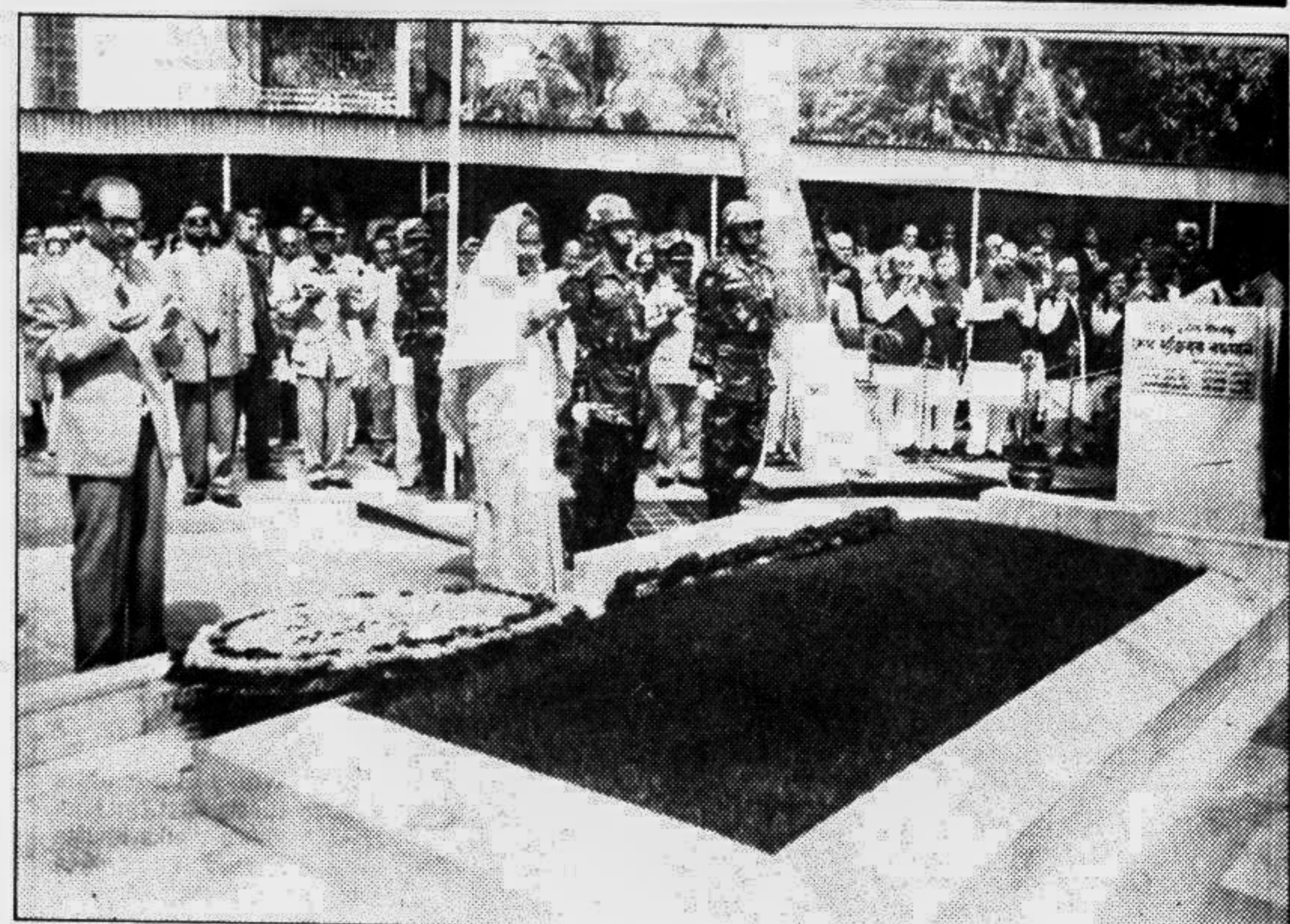
On the same date, two directors of AB Bank — M A Quasem and Iqbal Ahmed — also obtained stay orders from the court on notices they received from the BB.

They have filed writ petitions against the notices to repay money. Some senior lawyers are of the view that writ petition against such notices to repay money is not maintainable.

Ranjul Seraj of AB Bank was also served with notices on November 6, 1997. He obtained stay order on February 4.

Serajul Islam Chowdhury, Director of UCBL, was served with showcause notices on July 27, 1995. He obtained stay order from the HC on September 19, 1995. Later, the HC discharged the rule on July 1, 1997. But Chowdhury filed a civil petition before the Appellate Division which also allowed stay order.

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President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina offering munajat after placing wreaths at the mazar of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Tungipara on Tuesday. — PID photo

## 2 security guards murdered in Banani

By Staff Correspondent  
Two security guards of two adjoining houses were stabbed to death by unidentified assailants at Banani in the city early yesterday.

Police identified the dead as Zahirul Islam, 32, son of Sharif Mia, and Sheikh Jamal, 36, son of Dudu Sheikh.

Zahirul died on way to PG Hospital while Jamal succumbed to injuries at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) later.

The motive behind the double murder could not be known immediately, police said.

Local people suspected some youngsters of the locality might

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The abandoned drilling site of Occidental at Magurchhara, which was damaged in an explosion in June last. — Star photo

## 2 burnt alive as 200 huts gutted in city

By Staff Correspondent  
A woman and a minor girl were burnt alive as a fire gutted a slum at Pallabi in the city Tuesday.

Police identified the dead as Rahima, 55, wife of one Sheikh Rahman, and Rosy 10, daughter of one Yusuf.

About 170 families became homeless as the fire gutted four sheds, 200 feet by 18 feet each, at the Bihari slum in Kalapani under Pallabi thana at about 11:30 am.

Six fire fighting units put out the fire in about two hours, police said.

The fire reportedly originated from the flame of an earthen oven.

The congested single-room dwellings in the shed were inhabited by people from low income.

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## Govt planning to amend Constitution to give legal cover to CHT accord: BNP

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia has said that her party will launch a movement to resist the implementation of the CHT accord to protect the country's territorial integrity, reports UNB.

"By signing the CHT agreement, the government is handing over a major part of the country to a foreign country. How can we sign this accord? This accord is not for peace, it's for unrest," she said.

Begum Zia was talking to the leaders and workers of Chittagong Port Union Jatiya Sramik League, the labour front of ruling Awami League, who joined BNP at a function at her 29 Mint Road official residence on Tuesday.

Some 900 leaders and work-

ers of Chittagong Port Jatiya Sramik League, led by its general secretary Wahidullah Sarker, joined the BNP.

The BNP chairperson said the government is planning to amend the Constitution to give legal coverage to the so-called peace accord on the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

"They (the government) have resorted to stealing MPs as they lack the required number of lawmakers to amend the Constitution," she said.

Begum Zia feared that regionalism will raise its head if the CHT accord is implemented.

She said the implementation of the CHT accord may encourage the Garo and Hazong tribes in Sylhet, Dinajpur and Mymensingh to start separatist movements. There may be

movements demanding 'Bangabhumii.'

The opposition leader said the government has violated the Constitution by creating a special region comprising the three hill districts. There is no provision in the Constitution for creating such separate regions.

The BNP chairperson alleged that the government is hatching a conspiracy with the Chittagong sea port to cripple the national economy.

She also accused the Awami League government of repeating its anti-people activities assuming power after 21 years.

"But the government's oppressive measures have turned the people against them. People are now extending their independence and continue the economic

See Page 12 Col 8

## BJP govt to honour water sharing accord

NEW DELHI, Mar 18: Indian Prime Minister designate, Atal Behari Vajpayee, said here today that his government would honour the water sharing accord between Bangladesh and India signed in December 1996, reports BSS.

Releasing an eight-page national agenda in the presence of the leaders of BJP and its allies, he said the new government, to be sworn in tomorrow, will adopt a national water policy which provides for effective and prompt settlement of disputes and their time-bound implementation.

Putting all contentious issues on the back-burner, the national agenda of the BJP and its allies promised to usher in a new political era of reconciliation and continue the economic

reforms with a strong 'swadeshi' thrust and 'thoroughly' review the constitution.

On the national security of India, the agenda committed the coalition government to re-evaluating the country's nuclear policy exercising the option to induct nuclear weapons.

Vajpayee said his government would be committed to establishing a civilised, humane and just civil order, which did not discriminate on grounds of caste, religion, class, colour, race or sex.

"We will truly and genuinely uphold and practice the concept of secularism consistent with the Indian tradition of 'sarva panth samadara' (equal respect for all faiths) and on the basis of equality of all."

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## NOTICE National Export Trophy for the Year 1996-97

Export Promotion Bureau invited applications from exporters publishing advertisement in leading National Dailies earlier for Award of National Export Trophy for the year 1996-97. The date of submission of application to Export Promotion Bureau was 28-2-98. Keeping in view the importance of National Export Trophy and also for maximum participation of leading exporters, the above date for submission of applications has been extended to 31st March '98.

- The intending exporters are to apply in the prescribed proforma to be had from Export Promotion Bureau's Head Office in Dhaka, Regional Offices at Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi and Branch Offices at Comilla, Sylhet, Bogra and Barisal as well as offices of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Bangladesh Chambers of Industries, Metropolitan Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka and Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi and Exporters Association of Bangladesh, Dhaka. Prescribed proforma may also be obtained from the concerned Trade Association of Bangladesh.
- Applications in prescribed proforma duly filled in must reach the undersigned on or before 31-03-98. For further information Export Promotion Bureau may please be contacted.

DFF-5631-12/3 Major (Rtd) A K M Nizamul Alam G-504 Director (Commodity)

## Bangladesh-Nepal JEC meet ends Bilateral trade should increase to justify transit route: Kibria

Finance Minister S A M S Kibria yesterday said the business communities of both Bangladesh and Nepal should raise the volume of their trade to justify transit route through India all the week days, reports UNB.

"If the trade volume increases, then India will presumably increase the transit facilities," Kibria told the news agencies on his return at ZIA from Nepal after attending the 10th Bangladesh-Nepal Joint Economic Commission meeting.

"Without movement of adequate goods, either of bilateral

or international trade of Nepal, the transit will remain just a paper facility," he added.

The Finance Minister said the Nepalese side at the JEC meeting underlined the importance of the transit facility through India to and from Bangladesh ports for its export-import trade.

To justify the transit, Nepal must begin the actual trade which is still very low. Nepal should import through Chittagong and Mongla ports to increase the volume of movement of goods, Kibria said.

Kibria led a 9-member delegation to Nepal on a three-day

official visit. Nepalese side in the JEC meeting was led by his counterpart Rabinranath Sharma.

He said the JEC meeting covered the whole gamut of trade, transit and investment under joint venture.

Termining his visit successful, the Finance Minister said it was held in an extremely friendly and cordial environment. He said he had also talks with the King, Prime Minister and Water Resources Minister of Nepal.

The minutes of the meeting adopted jointly identified the

See Page 12 Col 3

## 'Punitive action will be taken if defaulters' list found faulty'

Finance Minister SAMS Kibria yesterday said punitive action will be taken against the officials of Bangladesh Bank and other banks concerned if their list of defaulters is found faulty, reports UNB.

"My source was Bangladesh Bank and I can't believe the Bank has given a fictitious list," Kibria said when his attention was drawn to the strong reaction of the business community to the list of defaulters he placed in parliament recently.

"Negligence on the part of the bank officials in preparing the list, if detected, will be dealt with severely," said the minister

in an apparent soft attitude toward the business community.

Talking to reporters on return home from Nepal, the Finance Minister advised those who have cleared their debts after September 1997, to inform the Banking Division. "We'll release their names if found not defaulters," he said.

Kibria said he believed the issue of defaulters should be seen in proper perspective. He admitted that those who failed to repay loans due to genuine reasons should not be bracketed with wilful defaulters.

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## Eastern Refinery to undergo major overhauling

CHITTAGONG, Mar 18: Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) completed all formalities to go for the first major overhauling of Eastern Refinery Ltd.

The Tk 9 crore renovation of the country's lone refinery would include replacement of its distillation column, the main body of the plant, official sources said.

BPC will bear the entire expenditure for the overhaul work to be completed in one year's time, from its own fund as per

approval of the ministry concerned, officials said.

BPC signed a draft agreement last month with a French company, BSL Industries, which originally installed the refinery plant over 30 years ago. It will replace the distillation column and the letter of indent was already issued in this connection.

The distillation column will be made by the French company at its industry and then it will be brought here for installation to replace the old one, officials

concerned said. The French company was engaged through an international tender.

Eastern Refinery is running with its worn-out plant for a long time though the longevity of it was for 15 years after installation, they said.

The plant suffered operation failure a number of times due to technical faults and it was run after some repair work without any major renovation of the plant.

The refinery had an in-

See Page 12 Col 1

## Acute shortage of LPG persists in N-dists

RAJSHAH, Mar 18: Short supply Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) in the northern districts has pushed its price to as high as Tk 700 a cylinder.

LPG cylinders are now available only in the black market, consumers alleged.

According to sources in the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, there are at least 25,000 consumers of LPG and 191 dealers in the 16 districts of Rajshahi Division.

The total monthly demand is about one lakh twenty thousand cylinders. The highest

number of 28,778 cylinders were supplied in July last year. The supply then gradually decreased and came down to almost half the quantity.

The sources said the short supply has been caused by less production of LPG cylinders in the Eastern Refinery. The production was 51,000 cylinders earlier but it has decreased by about 50 per cent now.

Cylinders are now being released from the Baghabari oil depot at an interval of 10-15 days.

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## TOMORROW

The number of women headed households, whether due to abandonment or death of the husband, is continuously increasing. How will these thousands of women most of them carrying the responsibility of two or more children, be absorbed into employment? This seemingly impossible task has been taken up by a remarkable project known as the Rural Maintenance Programme or RMP that aims to provide destitute women with employment and give them a means to become self-sufficient. Read Star Weekend Magazine this week on RMP's remarkable fairy-tale success story.

## Inside Today

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