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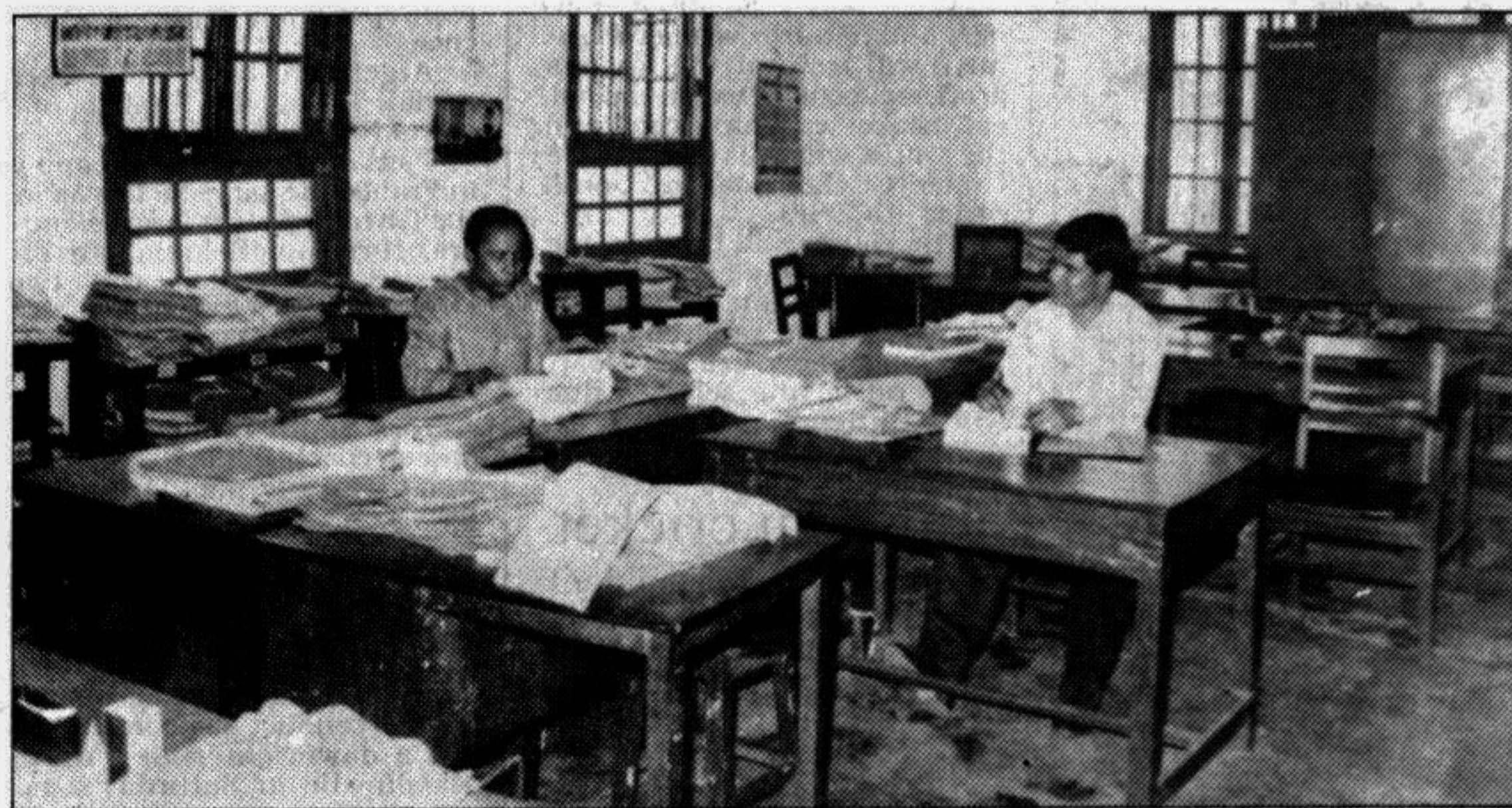
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PHILIPS

Tanners' syndicate

From Page 1 Leather Exporter Association (BFEA) created a chaos in the hides market this year. We have been in business for generations do you think anyone else can suddenly replace us? Hossain said. Aratdars believed the prices of hides and skin would rise sharply once the Eid sales were over. Within the next seven days, the tanners would come back to us for more hides and skin and then you will see, the prices would jump, said another aratdar at Posta. Price of a standard-size cow hide declined to Tk 750 to 800 from Tk 1800 to 1900 two years ago, madrasah and orphanages sources said. Hide merchants and tanners generally procure hides from orphanages and madrasahs. However, general people in the city this time sold hides and skin of their sacrificial animals at much lower prices. For them, the prices of cow hides between Tk 300 and Tk 600. When contacted, Abdus Sattar Bhuiyan, President of BFEA, admitted they had asked the tanners not to pay higher prices for raw hides and skin. This is not a syndicate, but we did it to keep the price of our products low in the line with the international market, he said. According to the BFEA decision, prices of cow hides and goat skin should be kept between Tk 25 to Tk 28 per square feet. The normal prices in the last two years had been between Tk 35 to 40 for per square feet. The BFEA president claimed the prices were low because unusually large number of animals were sacrificed. But aratdars disagreed and said at least 20 to 30 per cent less animals were slaughtered this time. They said the number of goats sacrificed was upto 50 per cent lesser than that last year. Bangladesh Hides and Skin Merchant Association sources alleged that before the Eid they were repeatedly asked by the tanners to keep the prices 'as low as possible'. Ali Hossain, General Secretary of the Association, told The Daily Star that the government had never helped the aratdars who had played a major role in procuring the hides and skin in the country. The government gave the money to tanners and they suddenly acted on their own, ignoring an established network like ours, said Hossain, adding, 'A section of people grabbed the opportunity and to my knowledge smuggled out a huge quantity across the border.' He thought the 'instruction' from Bangladesh Finished



A view of an office inside the Secretariat on the first working day yesterday after the Eid-ul-Azha holiday. -Star photo

Hartal to cause suffering to SSC examinees: ALPP

A meeting of the Awami League Parliamentary Party (ALPP) was held at the Sangsac Dhaban in the city yesterday afternoon with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair, reports BSS. The meeting discussed the overall situation of the country including the hartal call given by the main opposition BNP on the eve of the SSC examinations. The meeting observed that the hartal would cause untold miseries not only to the people but also to the SSC examinees and the guardians. It further observed that there was no ground for calling a hartal on the eve of the SSC examinations. The ALPP was of the view that the opposition was creating artificial crisis, including the price-hike of the essential commodities like salt and onions.

Richardson due today

From Page 1 Richardson programme includes a visit to a Rehabilitation Centre for Trafficked Women and Children run by the Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association in Dharmadhi. He will address a seminar on 'Making Democracy work in the Twenty-First Century' at the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies. He is also scheduled to visit a Grameen Bank micro-credit project at Narayanang. Richardson will stay at the residence of the US ambassador in Dhaka during his visit. This is the fourth visit of Bill Richardson to Bangladesh. He came once in 1995 and twice in 1996. On three previous occasions, he came to Bangladesh as a US Congressman and member of the House Intelligence Committee. He reportedly played an important role in the negotiation process between the government and opposition parties during the political standoff prior to the last general elections. Richardson would be arriving in Bangladesh from Bahrain on the second leg of his seven-nation tour. The other countries during his current tour include India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Bahrain. The US envoy is scheduled to leave Dhaka at 8.30 am tomorrow.

UP chairman shot in N'ganj

NARAYANGANJ, Apr 12: A union parishad chairman was shot by some unidentified gunmen at Simrail on Narayanang-Demra road this evening, police said, reports BSS. The incident occurred when Siddhirganj UP chairman Nur Hossain was gossiping with his friends by the side of his own fishery project. Four gunmen had come in an authorickshaw and shot the chairman, police said. The local people chased them and caught one of the accomplices, Sajal. A pistol was recovered from Sajal. Nur Hossain was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in a critical condition, police added.

Jamaat urges AL not to pass bill on CHT accord

The leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami at a meeting yesterday urged the ruling party not to pass the bill on 'CHT peace agreement' in Parliament, reports UNB. The meeting of the party's leaders and workers was organised at its city office to make the half-day hartal on Wednesday a success. The 7-party alliance including Jamaat and the main opposition BNP called the hartal to protest, what they said, the government move to pass the bill in Parliament by dint of its majority. They urged party leaders and workers as well as the patriotic force to make today's country-wide demonstration programme and Wednesday's half-day hartal a success.

3 raped in city

From Page 1 saying they were being chased by police. As they opened the door, Wasim and Moslem entered the room and brandishing sharp weapons violated the young girls. None was arrested till yesterday. Meanwhile, a four-year-old girl was raped in Uttara at around 1 pm Saturday. After being informed of the incident, police arrested the alleged rapist Rafiqul Islam, from an abandoned house in Diabari under Uttara thana. The alleged rapist was placed on a two-day remand for interrogation. A case was filed with Uttara thana under Women and Children Repression Control Act. The victim is now under going treatment at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

DU: 7 arrested

From Page 1 home-made pistol, 53 rounds of bullets, seven cartridges, some materials for making bombs and several sharp weapons. The arrested persons have been identified as Rashed Ahmed, Shohel, Shafi Ahmed Titu, Mamun, Khokom, Shafiqul Islam and Nazmul Islam. All of them are outsiders and two of them are accused in criminal cases. Three separate cases were lodged in this connection with Ramna thana.

Gas supply from Sangu

From Page 1 to be re-scheduled. At the same time, Cairn was trying to get a Tk one-crore budget approved for the April 22 inauguration ceremony. Cairn knew that it would not be able to complete the work by April 22, but it was going ahead with the inauguration ceremony to give an eye-wash that it had fulfilled its promise to supply gas within April, said an official. It is now estimated that Cairn might need more than a month to complete the remaining work at the gasfield. The government is very much disappointed by this development since it had publicised the event widely. Besides, the additional gas supply is urgently needed to improve the country's gas-based power generation. Sources said, Cairn could not provide the 160 mmcf of gas on day one as two of the six operating wells of Sangu did not produce gas. It cannot forcibly produce that amount of gas from the four wells. If Cairn does that, Sangu will become another Bakhrabad gasfield, said a source. Bakhrabad gasfield, discovered in the 60s, was known as the single largest gasfield with a proven recoverable reserve of 2.8 trillion cubic feet of gas. But due to ill-planned extraction of

First return Hajj flight arrives

Some 350 ballottee hajjis arrived home yesterday by the first return Hajj flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, reports UNB. Civil Aviation and Tourism Secretary Mohammad Omar Hadi and other high officials received them at Zia International Airport. Meanwhile, the first flight carrying the non-ballottee hajjis also arrived at the airport in the afternoon. Biman will operate 27 return flights for ballottee hajjis and 33 for non-ballottee hajjis till May 1, said a press release. The airlines will exclusively operate non-ballottee flights from May 2 to 6 while two more flights for the ballottee hajjis have been planned for May 7.

Koirala

From Page 1 Koirala as Prime Minister, a Royal palace communique broadcast on state radio said. On Friday, Surya Bahadur Thapa resigned from the premiership under an agreement reached with coalition partners last October. State radio said that Koirala's appointment was made by the 52-year-old monarch just hours after the deadline he had set for a coalition government expired. Koirala's Congress announced that its efforts to put together a coalition had failed and it would attempt to rule the Himalayan Kingdom with a minority government.

Separate bill

From Page 1 that the government could take necessary measures on the basis of public opinion, she added. Ayesha Khanam avoided a direct reply when asked to give a relative picture of repression on women during the BNP rule and the rule of Awami League now. We are now concerned as incidents of rape of girls in the age group 5 to 10 is now on the rise, just as the incidents of acid-throwing were on the rise earlier. The bill on prevention of repression on women and children should be drafted and tabled in the JS in the light of recommendations of the committee formed by the government for the purpose, she stressed. Mahila Parishad was also represented in that committee, she pointed out. The Parishad, however, did not feel 'betrayed' that the government was not considering recommendations of the committee, Ayesha Khanam noted. A practical and effective law on offences like rape, acid-throwing and other forms of repression on women and children should be passed by the JS at the earliest, she said. The press conference was also attended by among others, advocates Ziad Al Malu and Masuda Rehana Begum and Dr Maleka Bhanu, Assistant Secretary General of the organisation.

Hasina: Statements

From Page 1 its commitment for allowing a general discussion on the CHT issue, Sheikh Hasina said the Business Advisory Committee had decided on a thanks-giving motion on the peace accord. But there was no decision by the committee on a pre-condition for a general discussion, she noted. On the opposition claim that the CHT peace agreement was beyond constitutional provisions, the Prime Minister said, had it been so, anybody could have challenged it in the court. But none did so as everything was done within Constitutional provisions. The peace accord was signed in continuation of the peace process pursued by two previous governments, she said and blamed the past BNP government for 'protecting' the interests of the Shantibhumi by going for cease-fire at a time when the army was about to win over the armed insurgents. Sheikh Hasina ridiculed the BNP for opposing the peace agreement on grounds that it surrendered the national sovereignty. I don't understand how sovereignty is protected in a war-like situation in the CHT and sacrificed with restoration of peace there. About special privileges for the CHT people, she said constitution guaranteed such rights

Murder of BU official: None arrested yet

By Staff Correspondent None was arrested till yesterday in connection with the killing of Aslam Sardar, the joint secretary of 'Bothers' Union Club. Aslam, who was also the vice-president of Awami League in Ward No 30 of the city, was stabbed to death by unidentified persons on Saturday in front of the club at Gopabag under Motijheel thana. Meanwhile, the case was transferred to the Detective Branch yesterday. The FIR accused three persons for the murder. They are Nasir, Khokon and Kalam.

DMCH lacks facilities

From Page 1 court order. Baby was bleeding when she was brought to the DMCH from Mohammadpur thana in a police van by Sub-Inspector Gazi Ibrahim. The police officer alleged that attending doctors at the Gynae Ward No 17 hardly paid any attention to Baby when they reached there. When I arrived with Baby, there was none to receive my patient. I virtually had to persuade the doctor to attend Baby. Ibrahim said, Doctors tend to avoid being a witness in treating rape victims. I admit it is a hassle but it is also their duty. We can not proceed without their help because the priority is to save the victim. The attending doctor refused to give her name. She had asked me why I wanted to know her name, what was the purpose. Instead of cooperating, she delayed in attending Baby. I have investigated many rape cases. All end up in the same way. None wants to cooperate when we take rape victims to DMCH. I should rather call it a tragedy.

Minister tells JS Influential quarters grabbed huge khas lands

A senior minister yesterday admitted in Parliament that influential quarters have grabbed huge khas lands across the country through forgery, reports UNB. Seeking cooperation of all, Food and Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury told the House that it would be difficult for the government alone to recover the lands and distribute those among the landless people. The Food Minister was replying to questions as the State Minister for Land was not present in the House. Responding to a question of Abdul Latif Mirza (AL), the Food Minister said the government has a plan to allot khas lands among the landless people. And the settlement process is under process on the basis of a policy. In reply to a supplementary by M Golam Hossain (JP), she said the settlement process of khas land is very difficult. Matia said coordination committees have been formed in every thana with MPs as advisors to distribute khas lands. According to the policy, the minister said, families of the freedom fighters and those who lost their land in river erosion, widows and landless people will be given priority during distribution of the khas lands.

Wheat procurement target refixed at 2.5 lakh tons

The government has refixed the wheat procurement target at two to 2.5 lakh tons this year. Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury informed the House yesterday, reports BSS. She said due to different measures taken by the government wheat production this year will exceed the production of last year. In reply to a question from M Emdadul Haq (AL-Thakurgaon) the minister said production of Aman paddy had fell due to drought in last October in Mymensingh, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Rajshahi and Barisal. Besides, the Aman production was hampered due to pest attack in greater Mymensingh, Sylhet and some other adjoining districts. The minister said the use of substandard TSP fertilizer instead of TSP also had a negative impact on the production.

BNP to return

From Page 1 discussion with party MPs regarding return to the House and participation in the discussion on CHT bills. The BNP leaders also condemned the stopping of telecasting the speech of Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia on BTV. Such activities are in violation of the recently signed 4-point agreement between the government and the Opposition, the BNP leaders said. Chief whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain, Saifur Rahman, Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Barrister Nazmul Huda, MK Anwar were, among others, present at the briefing.

4 bills placed

From Page 1 statutory body. An additional point stipulated in the bill provides for empowering the government to dissolve the regional council. Article 41 (i) of the bill said if the government, after inquiry, is satisfied that the council has failed in carrying out its administrative and financial responsibilities, indulged in activities against the interest of the people, exceeded or abused its power, it may dissolve the Council, after giving it the opportunity to explain its conduct. The 25-member Regional Council will be constituted by a Chairman and 24 members representing 12 tribal, six non-tribal, two tribal women, one non-tribal woman and three chairmen of the hill district parishes of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban. Of the 14 tribal members, six male and both the women members will be elected from the Chakma tribe. The chairman will be elected from among the tribal members. The Regional Council will be elected for a five-year term and the election will be conducted by the Election Commissioner. Three more identical bills seeking amendments to the Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban Local Government Council Acts, 1989, were tabled in Parliament yesterday. The objectives of the bills said certain deletion, addition, alteration and changes in the existing laws were necessitated to bring those in conformity with the CHT peace accord.

BNP stages walkout

From Page 1 rupted initially. But her remarks drew a fusillade of protests from the Treasury back benchers, also joined by the front benchers. They were heard saying that her remarks were not correct and uncalled for since the bills were yet to be tabled. Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury initially tried to calm the treasury benchers asking all to maintain order. But he interrupted Begum Zia later, telling her to come to the point on which she rose to speak, the order of the day's business. She eventually did so. Among a dozen Treasury Bench members who tried to draw the Speaker's attention, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim and Abdul Latif Siddiquy were given the floor. They contended that the statement of Begum Zia was out of context and rules of procedure and urged the Speaker to expunge it. Humayun Rashid Chowdhury said he would examine the statement of Begum Zia and if it did not conform to the rules of procedure it would be expunged. This brought in Deputy Leader of the Opposition Badruddoza Chowdhury, who cited Articles 301 and 302 of the rules of procedure to say that Begum Zia was very much within her right to make the statement. He said it was agreed by the business advisory committee that a general discussion would be held on the CHT accord before the bills were placed before the House. Badruddoza termed the CHT accord a significant one and said that a people would not accept it. If necessary, we shall seek a referendum on this issue, even mid-term polls, he added. He urged the Chair not to guillotine any part of Begum Zia's statement, which would be a 'bad precedent'. At this stage, Tofael Ahmed blasted the Leader of the Opposition, saying her statement was premature. She could have made her observations after the bills were tabled. He brushed aside Begum Zia's remark that it was Awami League which sent troops to CHT. He denied that any tribal had left the country before August 15, 1975.

Bangladeshi made Queen's Counsel

Ajmalul Hossain, an advocate of Appellate Division of the Bangladesh Supreme Court, has been appointed a counsel for the Queen of England, reports UNB. Barrister Hossain is the first Bangladeshi who has been elevated to the rank of Queen's Counsel (QC) in the UK. The Times' of London reported on April 9 that Her Majesty Queen of England has appointed Hossain as one of her Majesty's Counsel on a recommendation from the Lord Chancellor. Hossain will be sworn in on May 1 by the Lord Chancellor of Great Britain at a ceremony at the House of Lords when he will be given the Letters Patent of appointment. The swearing-in ceremony will be followed by other formalities the same afternoon at the Royal Courts of Justice, said a press release issued in the city yesterday. Ajmalul Hossain is the second son of Barrister Asrarul Hossain.

Khaleda: Fresh bills

From Page 1 Referring to the Constitution, Begum Zia said there was neither any scope for constituting the Regional Council, nor the Constitution allowed separate ministry on the basis of region. The accord (CHT peace accord) is illegal, ultra vires to the Constitution. It is designed to undermine the parliament. It is not acceptable to the people, she said. The BNP chairperson said the accord has curbed the rights of the citizens, sowed the seeds of discrepancy and reduced the non-tribal people living in a region to second class citizens. It will encourage regionalism and separation, she feared. It's a black accord and has been rejected by the people, she said. The BNP chairperson alleged that the problem in the CHT started in 1972 when the Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had rejected the plea of autonomy made by Manabendra Narayan Larma. Again, she said, Sheikh Mujib in a public meeting in Rangamati had asked the tribal people to identify themselves as Bangalees. Following that, she added, army was deployed by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to contain the Chakma rebels who took to arms. Begum Zia said President Ziaur Rahman had taken initiatives to resolve the problem by speedy development of the area and promoting culture of the tribal population.

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বাংলা একাডেমী জাতির মননের প্রতীক
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