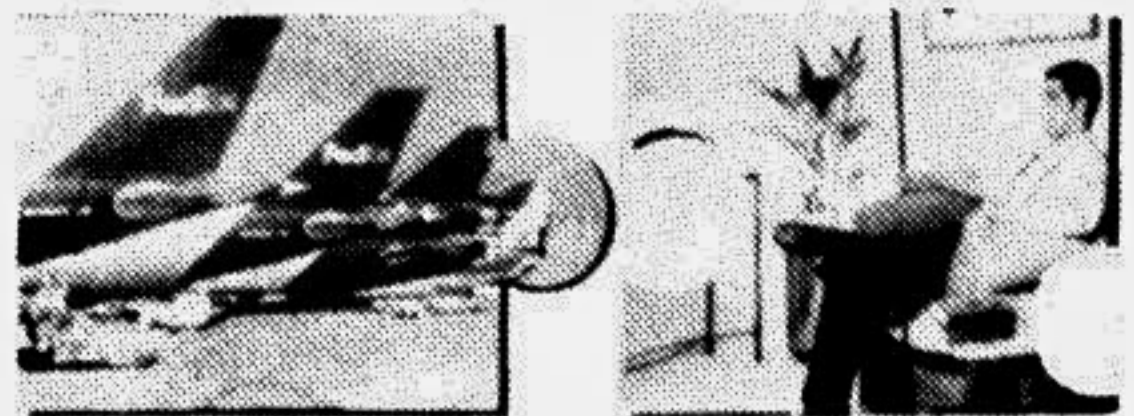


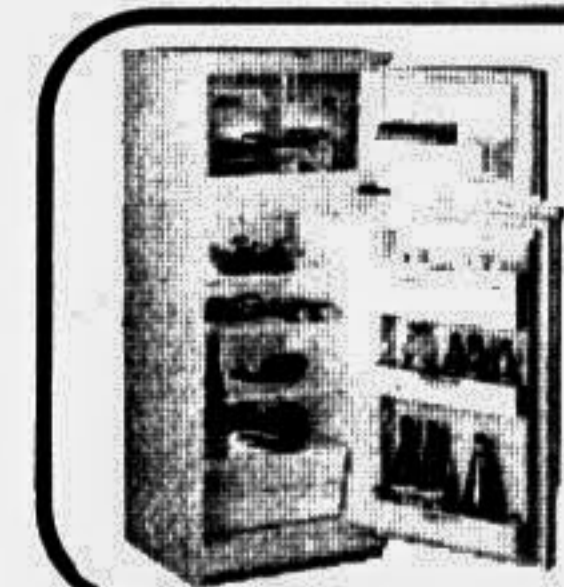
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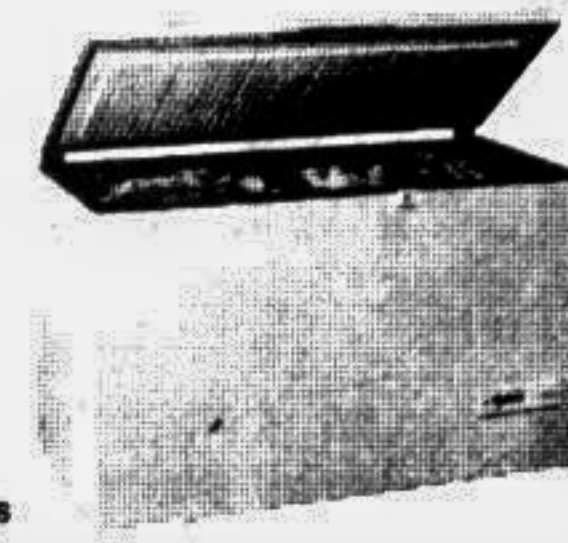


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Rafiqul replies to questions in JS Judiciary urged not to grant bails to identified criminals

Home Minister Rafiqul Islam in Parliament yesterday urged the judiciary not to grant bails to identified criminals for maintaining law and order as well as social order, report agencies. An investigation into the formulation of several police cases has been ordered following reports that a number of criminals are likely to be released on bail, he said. "We will find out if there is any lapse in formulation of cases against the accused," he said while replying to a question from Awami League member Meher Afroz Chumki. The AL MP had referred to a newspaper report that 100 criminals are being released by courts due to loopholes in formulation of the cases. Referring to a supplementary report from Md Jalal Uddin Talukder (AL-Netrakona), he said social awareness is required to stop repression on women. Those who repress women should be unmasked to the people, he added. The Home Minister said that in the last three months, 381 persons were rescued while they were being trafficked. Seeking the help of all to stop child and woman trafficking and repression, the minister said he would convene a meeting within next 10 to 15 days and hoped that all would take part and give their suggestions. He told the House that the government plans to introduce less fatal weapons for police to avoid casualties during confrontation with miscreants. Replying to a question from

Smoking in public places may be banned, JS told

By Staff Correspondent State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr Amanullah told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday that smoking could be banned in public places. Responding to a call attention notice on matters of public importance, the state minister said that being directed by the Prime Minister, the Health Secretary had written to the Cabinet Secretary requesting the latter to declare the Secretariat a smoking-free zone. All directorates, departments and hospitals under the Ministry of Health were already declared smoking-free, he noted. In his notice, Treasury Bench lawmaker from Dinajpur-6 constituency, Md Mostafizur Rahman proposed a complete ban on smoking in the country in phases with initial restriction on smoking in all government offices and educational institutions. Dr Amanullah, however, called for waging a social movement against smoking as it is injurious to health. He said that the US had succeeded in bringing down the chance of heart attack by 20 per cent just through anti-smoking campaign.



Villagers sit helplessly amid the ruins of their houses in Agham village, 45 kilometers to the south of Srinagar, the capital of the northern Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, yesterday. About 60 houses were gutted in an encounter which continued for three days between the Indian army and suspected militants. Seven suspected militants and three soldiers were killed in the shootout.

JS: Lively debate

From Page 1 cident. Senior leaders of the Treasury and the Opposition benches participated in the debate, in the presence of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia. Attendance in the House was larger yesterday than on any other day recently. Opening the debate, BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan criticised the Speaker for "not maintaining neutrality" in conducting the business of the Sangsad. In this regard, he referred to the four-point agreement his party signed with the ruling party and regretted that they were not allowed to discuss in the House on the CHT issue, law and order, price spiral of essentials and repression on women. "We called Wednesday's hartal for not giving us the chance to discuss these issues..." Blaming some ministers for provoking killings during Wednesday's hartal, the BNP leader said observing hartal is a democratic right. "Hartal can't be resisted by police force and armed hoodlums. Such efforts will rather harm the process of democracy," he noted. Mannan Bhuiyan recalled that the AL had enforced hartals frequently with and without reasons while it was in the opposition. The BNP lawmaker also called up the home minister to take action against those responsible for "terrorist activities" during the hartal hours. He also condemned the armed attack on BNP MP Zaul Haq Zia's Laxmipur house on the day. In response, Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed said the BNP has introduced a "scandalous" chapter in the country's parliamentary history by attacking the Speaker, "showing him shoe" and damaging TV cameras on Wednesday. Amidst shouts by BNP lawmakers who included Opposition Chief Whip Khandakar Delwar Hossain and MK Anwar, Tofael pointed his finger at the two opposition leaders and said "Khandakar Delwar and MK Anwar are two of the 14 accused in Wednesday's incident." The minister blamed the BNP chief for "instigating" the incident. He also accused the BNP to killing 142 people during the hartals called by the AL while in the opposition. Khandakar Delwar Hossain castigated Tofael Ahmed for calling him an accused, termed it an irresponsible statement and requested the Chair to expel him. Meanwhile, a handout of the Education Ministry yesterday warned that if anyone is found involved in the leakage of question papers will be punished with a minimum three years to maximum 10 years in jail. British Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Derek Fatchett will arrive in the city on Wednesday on a two-day official visit, reports UNB. Fatchett will have bilateral talks with State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury. He will also join a round table discussion with the leading members of the business community and familiarise himself with the British aid programme, and commercial, consular and immigration operations in Bangladesh. The British State Minister is scheduled to call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, senior cabinet members and political leaders. Dhaka is the second largest recipient of bilateral aid from the United Kingdom. Around 50 million pounds sterling (Tk 380 crore) are likely to be given in aid this year. The BNP leaders said trade, industry and economy of the country have almost been crippled by the "motivated loadshedding." The frequent loadshedding has also added to the sufferings of the city dwellers. The rally pointed out that thousands of SSC and Dakhil examinees are also facing problem due to the loadshedding during their examinations. It further alleged that criminal activities like snatching, kidnapping, robbery and rape had increased at night alarmingly in the city because of frequent power failure.

DESA Amendment Bill passed

Parliament last night passed the Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority (Amendment) Bill, 1998 providing for inclusion to and exclusion from DESA certain areas for proper management and transmission of power, reports UNB. Winding up the discussion on the Bill, State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources Prof Rafiqul Islam said remote areas of Narayan and Gazipur districts, now under DESA, would be handed over to the Rural Electrification Board. The measures were needed for better management and distribution of power by DESA. Replying to opposition criticism, the minister said the BNP government during its rule had failed to generate a single additional megawatt of electricity.

Body to probe collapse of Natyashala Bhaban

The government has formed a high-powered committee to investigate the causes of the collapse of under-construction Jatiya Natyashala Bhaban at the Shilpakala Academy, reports UNB. The members of the committee are Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury, Prof Sohrabuddin Ahmed and Prof M Azadur Rahman of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology. They visited the spot yesterday, said an official handout.

Shot dead

From Page 1 an instant reaction. The road barricade disrupted all transport services till his dead body had reached Noapara at Noon today after autopsy. A murder case has been recorded with Abhoynagar thana. Police said the alleged killer had joined Jubo League from Jubo Dal.

Breakthrough

From Page 1 ment and the PCJSS to refrain from 'all types of repressions' on them. The Awami League government is also following the path of the BNP government which had passed five years in the name of talks, they said. "It will also pass five years, making a farce in the name of meeting. They will not observe even the minimum conditions of the treaty of 'compromise' which has been rejected by the CHT people." They also urged Shantu Larma not to use the names of the three organisations to 'save' themselves. The statement was issued by Prasad B Khisa, Dipty Shankar Chakma and Kabita Chakma.

MIST to train Doctors claim

From Page 1 leading the 9-member RMCH team, said, "We are treating the patients with Glucose nutrition along with steroid and some anti-biotic drugs." He said, "Things are improving. We haven't had anymore patients seeking admission since yesterday." Two other official teams from Dhaka came to collect viscera, blood and urine samples of patients to determine the exact cause of toxicity. Besides, a 22-member team comprising doctors, nurses and class four employees is also working at the GSH. Meanwhile, the OC of Sadar thana, two sub-inspectors of police and two habildars were suspended yesterday (Saturday) for negligence to duties in connection with this incident.

OC 'caught' in a hotel room

From Our Correspondent BARGUNA, Apr 19: Local people caught the Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Patharghata thana and a woman red-handed while they were engaged in "anti-social" activity at a hotel here today. The agitated people caught the OC, Mohammad Ansaruddin, and the woman, Shirin Begum, 26, breaking the door of a room of the Hotel Diip at Barguna town at around 8 am today. Local people later brought out a procession in the town demanding trial and punishment of the OC.

Indian frigates arrive in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Apr 19: Two Indian navy frigates INS Tir and INS Krishna arrived in Chittagong today on a three-day goodwill visit. Official sources said the two Indian frigates had anchored at Port jetties No. 1 and 2 after reaching here at 2 pm. INS Tir is commanded by Captain P. Sangupta while INS Krishna is commanded by PK Chatterjee.

Population now 12.7cr, JS told

The country's total population stood at 12,70,35,000 as of yesterday (April 19), parliament was told by State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, reports UNB. The present population, he said, has been estimated based on the last population census conducted on March 11, 1991 when the country's total population was 11,14,55,185. Of the total population, there are 105.9 males for every 100 females, the state minister said replying to a supplementary question from Kazi Keramat Ali (AL-Rajbari). The government has a plan to conduct the next census in March, 2001.

889 expelled on third day of SSC exams

Some 889 SSC examinees were expelled from different centres across the country for adopting unfair means on the third day of the examination yesterday, sources said, reports UNB. During the examination in Bengali first paper, 303 students were expelled from different centres in Dhaka, 205 in Rajshahi, 71 in Comilla, 209 in Chittagong and 36 in Jessore education boards respectively. Under the Dhaka Board, 29 examinees were expelled from Jamalpur, 36 in Sherpur, 82 in Netrakona, 13 in Faridpur, 7 in Gopalganj, 4 in Rajbari, 16 in Madaripur, 12 in Shariatpur, 41 in Tangail, 33 in Mymensingh and 30 in Narsingdi. In Rajshahi Board, 76 students were expelled from Rajshahi city, 21 in Panchagar, 56 in Nilphamari, 34 in Bogra, 8 in Lalmonirhat, 10 in Pabna, 8 in Natore and 12 in Naogaon.

Khaleda

From Page 1 unprecedented. Only a fascist government can resort to such acts, she added. The opposition leader said the government is becoming more unnerved as people's agony is increasing amidst its misrule, silent famine, price-hike of essentials, and crisis of gas, power and water. She alleged that the government is handing over arms to the born-criminals to check people's agitation. "Government is creating 'Awami godfather' in each district, like in Feni."

Policeman held on charge of kidnapping girl

From Our Correspondent NARAYANGANJ, Apr 19: A police constable was arrested today on charge of kidnapping a teenage girl. Fatullah police arrested Yousuf Ali, 32, along with the kidnapped girl from a house at Fatullah where they had been residing since April 17. It was alleged that Yousuf Ali of Bholabo police camp under Rugganj thana kidnapped Mansura Begum, 15 of Rugganj thana on April 17. The constable was suspended following a case lodged by the father of the girl Jainal Abedin with Rugganj thana.

Nasaka returns 11 Bangladeshi woodcutters

BANDARBAN, Apr 19: The eleven woodcutters who were arrested by Myanmar's Nasaka border force on charge of illegal entry were handed over to the Bangladesh authorities today, reports BSS. The release of the Bangladeshi woodcutters followed a flag meeting between Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Myanmar's border force Nasaka. The flag meeting was held here today at border pillar Number 38 of Tumburu border. The woodcutters were rounded up by Myanmar's border force on April 18 as they reportedly crossed the international border by mistake.

'Talks with PCJSS stage-managed'

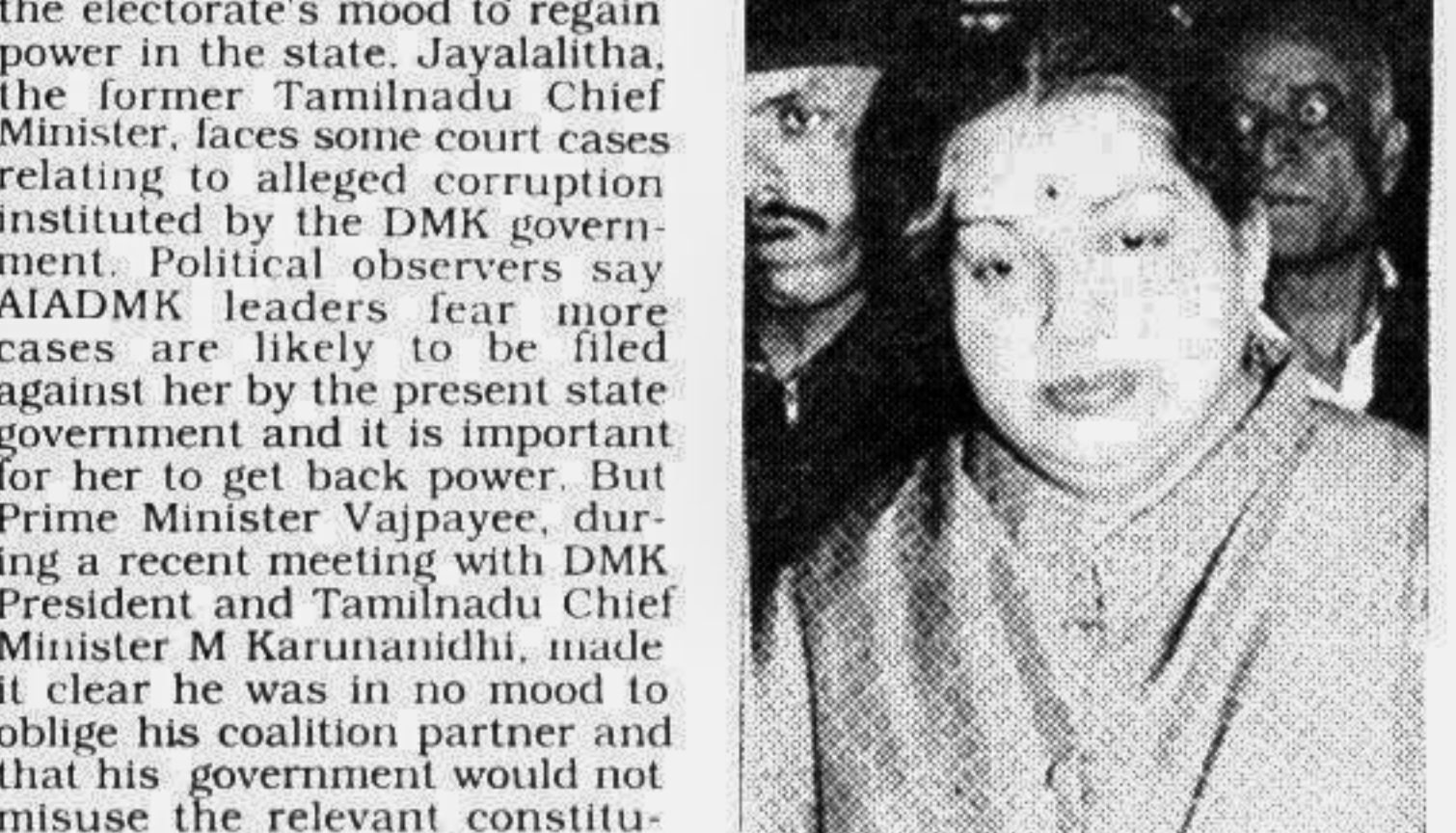
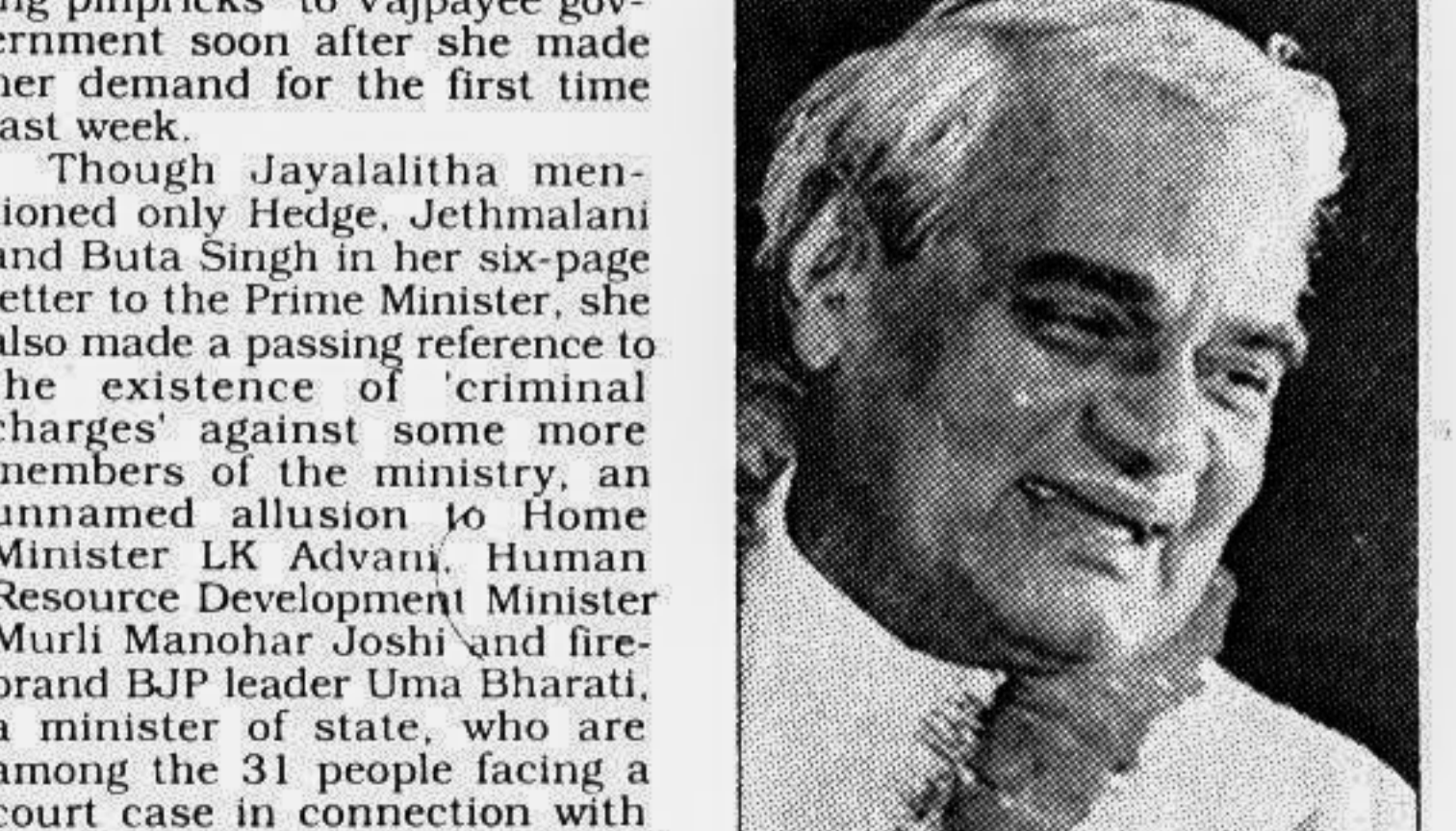
Three hill organisations have criticised the ongoing government-PCJSS talks, calling it "a stage-managed game and farce," reports UNB. Prasad B Khisa of Hill People's Council, Dipty Shankar Chakma of Hill Students' Council and Kabita Chakma of the Awami League government followed the footprint of BNP government in killing time in the name of 'marathon discussion'. Branding the government as 'autocratic and subservient to another country', she said it cannot weed out BNP from the soil of the country as it is a people's organisation. Another reports adds: BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has condemned the killing and arrest of and filing of 'false' cases against party leaders and workers during and after Wednesday's nationwide half-day hartal. Bhuiyan in a statement yesterday alleged that failing to run the country the present government has exposed its 'fascist character' to stop the ongoing movement for protecting the country's independence, sovereignty and people's interest.

Jayalalitha accuses Vajpayee of 'double standard'

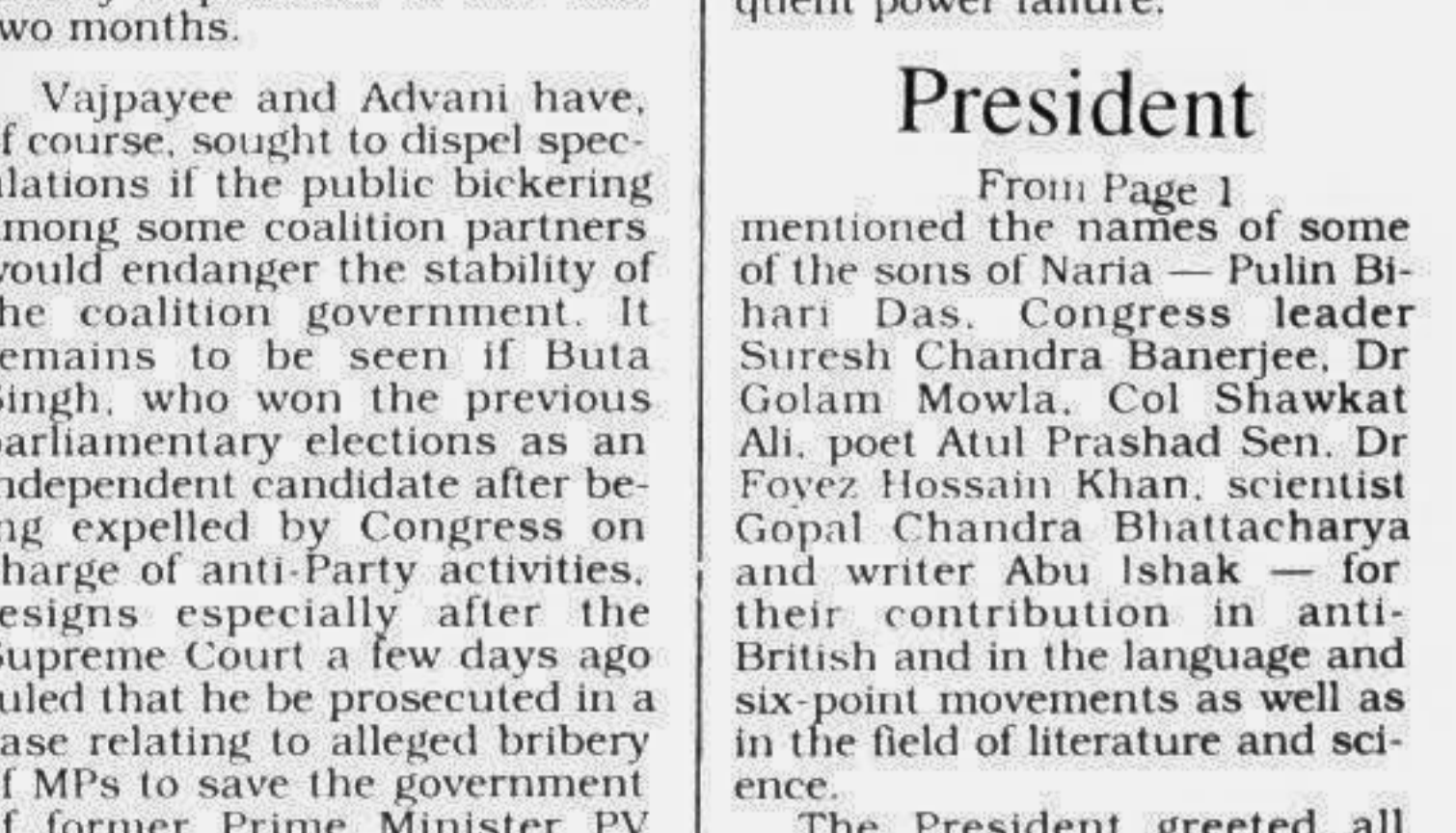
From Page 1 clean image of the government. But it is rather strange and unfortunate that there has been a failure on your part in adopting the same set of principles with regard to persons similarly placed, if not in a worse position than Muthiah." The AIADMK supreme trained her guns at Hegde and Jethmalani who had criticised her for "giving pinpricks" to Vajpayee government soon after she made her demand for the first time last week. Though Jayalalitha mentioned only Hegde, Jethmalani and Buta Singh in her six-page letter to the Prime Minister, she also made a passing reference to the existence of "criminal charges" against some more members of the ministry, an unnamed allusion to Home Minister LK Advani, Human Resource Development Minister Murlidhar Joshi and firebrand BJP leader Uma Bharati, a minister of state, who are among the 31 people facing a court case in connection with the demolition of Babri Mosque in 1992. Given the fact that the BJP-led coalition government is a minority and was bailed out in a confidence vote only by an eleventh-hour decision by Telugu Desam Party (TDP), the support of AIADMK and its allies in Tamil Nadu hold the key to survival of Vajpayee min-

istry. It is unclear as yet if Jayalalitha's party and its allies would withdraw support to Vajpayee government but her letter to the Prime Minister clearly reflects a hardening of stand putting a big question mark on its longevity. Apart from the larger issue of morality raised by Jayalalitha's demand, political analysts say it is her "pressure tactic" to secure the dismissal of her sworn political foe Dravida Munnetra Kazhgham (DMK) government in Tamilnadu on the ground of alleged breakdown of law and order there. Analysts say Jayalalitha was clearly peeved by Vajpayee's stand and mounted the "counter-pressure" by making the demand regarding minis-

ters facing court cases. What is further believed to have antagonised Jayalalitha is the clean cut given by a team of central government officials who were recently asked to assess law and order in Tamilnadu in the wake of allegations made by AIADMK. In what was seen as a "damage control" exercise, Advani said while the central team assessed only law and order in Tamilnadu, the central government was worried by spread of terrorism in the state. Advani also said his government was considering Jayalalitha's demand to send a second central government team



Vajpayee



Jayalalitha

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President From Page 1 mentioned the names of some of the sons of Naria - Pulin Bihari Das, Congress leader Suresh Chandra Banerjee, Dr Golam Mowla, Col Shawkat Ali, poet Atul Prasad Sen, Dr Foyez Hossain Khan, scientist Gopal Chandra Bhattacharya and writer Abu Ishak - for their contribution in anti-British and in the language and six-point movements as well as in the field of literature and science. The President greeted all concerned who were involved in establishing the college by private initiative in 1972 and was later upgraded to a government college. The function was also addressed, among others, by Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak, Col (ret'd) Shawkat Ali MP and college Principal Prof M Abdul Momin Mia.