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Rangamati hill dist bill passed after BNP's stormy walkout

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday passed the Rangamati Hill District Local Government Council (Amendment) Bill, 1998 and accepted two other similar bills on Khagrachhari and Bandarban hill districts for immediate consideration.

The bill on Rangamati hill district, containing an amendment proposed by the Law Minister, was passed by voice vote at 7:50 pm.

Lawmakers belonging to the main opposition BNP walked out of the House before the passage of the bill piloted by Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru.

Jatiya Party voted against the bill.

BNP legislators led by Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia staged the stormy walkout and did not return to the House till adjournment of the session at 8 pm for resumption at 11 am today.

Earlier, they staged another walkout and returned after 10 minutes.

Aggrieved by the Chair's arrangement with regard to giving floor to lawmakers for speaking in favour of their respective notices on the bills, BNP MPs tore copies of the bills and walked out of the House.

The only amendment to the bill concerns definition of 'non-tribal permanent resident' referred to in sub-clause '(AA)' under article 4 of the bill. In the amended form, the definition of 'non-tribal permanent resident' is — one who is not a tribal and possesses legal property in the hill district or generally resides at a particular address. Initially, the definition was 'not-tribal permanent resident' would mean — one who is not a tribal and possesses legal property in the hill district and generally resides at a particular address.

Responding to a number of Jatiya Party lawmakers' observations regarding definition of 'non-tribal permanent resident', Abdul Matin Khasru said he was proposing replacement of the word 'and' by another word 'or' to remove any confusion.

Earlier, a number of other amendments to all the 37 articles of the bill brought by six JP lawmakers were rejected by the House by voice vote. JP legislators Fazle Rabbi, Rabeya Bhuiyan, GM Kader, Dr Asadur Rahman, Abdul Mukit Khan and Abdur Rashid Sarkar proposed the amendments.

Earlier, JP chief HM Ershad spoke on behalf of his party lawmakers, calling for eliciting public opinion on the bill and sending the bill to the select committee. However, the House rejected the proposal by voice vote.

Responding to some JP lawmakers' concern over sovereignty and integrity of the country in the wake of the CHT peace accord and bills for its implementation. The Law Minister asserted that none of the provisions of the bills violated the Constitution. He argued that bills on three hill district councils were 'just a modification effort' concerning the councils which were constituted during

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Residents of the city's Lalbagh area brought out a procession yesterday protesting water crisis. —Star photo

2-yr-old baby raped in city

By Staff Correspondent

A 2-year-old girl was raped allegedly by a teenage boy at Kuril under Cantonment thana in the city Thursday.

Police said they arrested the boy identified as Rony, 16, a school student, for his alleged involvement in the rape incident.

The girl has been under treatment at the Dhaka CMH since Friday last, police said, adding Roni confessed to police about his involvement in the incident after he was arrested on Saturday.

Police, quoting relatives of the victim, said Rony, a neighbour, who often visited the victim's house used to take her into his lap and pat her.

On Thursday, Rony took the infant into his lap and took her to his residence at about 11 am. Then Rony raped her on a bed inside a room of their house, police said.

Police produced Roni before the CMM's Court Saturday. The court sent Roni to Dhaka Central Jail.

The father of the victim filed a case with Cantonment thana Saturday under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act 1995.

4365 amendments to 3 CHT bills proposed

Opposition members have proposed 4,365 amendments to three bills on the Local Government Hill District Councils of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban, reports UNB.

"It will take three years and eight months if all the members who sought amendments are allowed to take part in the discussion on the bills, observed Speaker Humayun Rashed Chowdhury, in the JS yesterday.

By that time the tenure of this Parliament will come to an end and discussion will roll on to the next Parliament," he added.

He said 4,365 notices seeking to elicit public opinion, refer the bills to the Select Committee and amendments to various

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BNP protests, calls hartal Wednesday

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP has called a half-day countrywide hartal on Wednesday to protest the Speaker's "denial of the Opposition's right to speak on the anti-constitutional CHT bills" in the Jatiya Sangsad.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the BNP lawmakers soon after their second walkout from the House yesterday when three bills on hill district councils for Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban were placed for consideration of the House. Later on the day, one of the three bills was passed by the House, in the absence of the BNP.

The decision of the hartal was endorsed at a meeting of the BNP-led Seven-Party Alliance later in the evening.

A BNP lawmakers' meeting with party chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair at her Minto Road official residence also decided to meet President Shahabuddin Ahmed this morning to request him not to assent to the CHT bills after their passage in the parliament, meeting sources said.

The sources said the party lawmakers, led by Begum Zia, will start a march towards the Bangabhaban from her Minto Road residence at 11 am to hand over a memorandum to the President.

Briefing newsmen after BNP's second walkout, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Prof AQM Badruddoza Choudhury alleged that the government was trying to re-establish one-party BKSAL system in the country by "forcing the Opposition out of the parliament".

At the briefing held at his

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Above average rainfall in May forecast

By Special Correspondent

A heavy downpour for more than an hour yesterday afternoon flooded some city streets for sometime.

Weather will remain a little better for the next couple of days, to be followed by foul weather for days, said the Met Office in its forecast yesterday.

But the wet weather was not supposed to be there at this time of the year.

What is happening to the weather since early this year remains a big puzzle.

Dense fog blanketed the horizon for more than two weeks in January with temperatures plummeting close to breaking the past records.

The rains had exceeded their normal average in the first quarter of 1998, a trend which continued in April.

Weather officials and experts from different government de-

See Page 12 Col 5

Shazneen murder

Some points still unresolved, CID to seek Shahid's remand again

By Staff Correspondent

Shahid, accused in the Shazneen murder case, will be produced again before the CMM's Court today and CID may pray for his remand for some more days to investigate further whether their was any abettor in the murder.

Shahid was placed on a five-day remand earlier which ended yesterday, said a senior CID officials. Another five day's remand may be sought, he said.

Police search and interrogation continued yesterday as they were yet to find out involvement of more than one person in the killing of 15-year-old Shazneen Tasnim Rahman.

Asked why they plan to seek remand again, a CID official pointed out two things, to come to a satisfactory conclusion whether there was any abettor to Shahid, and to verify some of his statements.

Shazneen, youngest daughter of Latifur Rahman, Chairman of Transcom Ltd, was brutally stabbed to death in her bedroom at their Gulshan residence on the night of April 23.

CID was investigating the following questions till yesterday, sources concerned said.

1. The time span between Shazneen's last telephonic conversation with her friend and Parvin's entry into the room. Parvin one of the two maids at Rahman's residence who gave confessional statements accusing Shahid for the murder, had said that she saw Shahid sitting on Shazneen's body. Investigators earlier thought that the whole incident of alleged violation and murder had not taken more than half an hour.

The CID teams is investigating exactly how long it took to commit the crime.

2. There were some deep marks of injury which may have been caused by the blow of some other sharp instruments other than the kitchen knife which was seized following the murder. A CID official said they are investigating it.

3. Shahid told the investigators that a portion under a sleeve of his white striped shirt was stained with blood. But it was suspicious how only a small portion of the shirt was stained while Shazneen's body bore marks of more than 20

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Minor girl raped in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, May 3: A minor girl was raped at Madarbari in the city allegedly by a security guard yesterday afternoon, reports UNB.

Police said guard Selim took the seven-year-old girl Nur Akhter Begum to an empty house behind Khawja Bekari in the area and violated her.

The mother of the girl filed a case.

Nur Akhter was produced before the court today which ordered for her medical examination.

The court also ordered police to keep her in custody for safety.

Warrant of arrest was issued against the alleged rapist Selim.

$ 150 m IDA loan for development of primary edn

Bangladesh will receive 150 million US dollar from IDA for Primary Education Development Programme under an interim fund credit agreement, reports UNB.

The agreement was signed on Thursday in Washington with IDA, World Bank's soft lending agency.

Bangladesh Ambassador to the United States K M Shehabuddin and World Bank Vice President Mieko Nishimozo signed the agreement on behalf of their respective sides.

Speaking on the occasion, Mieko Nishimizo expressed her satisfaction over the signing of the credit agreement and hoped that Bangladesh would take necessary steps for implementation of the project.

Gas production from Lakkatura well delayed by 3 months

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, May 3: Production of gas from the Lakkatura well site will now be delayed by another three months.

"Production from the well at Lakkatura and three other wells near the location is expected to begin from the third quarter of 1998," said Gonzulo Ruiz, an Occidental official, during a press briefing here today.

Asked whether inefficiency of the company or its sub-contractors were responsible for the gas leakage, Gonzulo denied saying that the company and all its sub-contractors maintained highest international standards.

"The labourers affected due to the leakage of gas will be compensated shortly," he added.

As part of the PSC for Blocks 13 and 14 signed in January 1995, Occidental agreed to apprise and develop the Jalalabad field. The company was scheduled to drill three new well, workover the original discovery well and build a facility and pipeline to produce 100 MMCF gas everyday.

After revising the production schedule for the Jalalabad field on three occasions the company was supposed to start

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Pak HC summoned to Foreign Office, told

Bangladesh can forgive Pakistan, but never forget '71 genocide

Bangladesh yesterday said that it would never forget the untold sufferings the nation went through in 1971 and the heavy price paid by the people for liberation, reports BSS.

"If Pakistan asks forgiveness, we may forgive, but we can never forget the sufferings that we went through and the sacrifices we made for our liberation," a senior Foreign Ministry official told the Acting High Commissioner of Pakistan.

Rifat Iqbal was summoned to the Foreign Office yesterday afternoon and conveyed the sentiment of the government and the people of Bangladesh on the issue, Foreign Office sources said.

This was in response to what was told to QAMA Rahim, Bangladesh High Commissioner to Islamabad, on April 23 about the so-called "anti-Pakistan propaganda being carried out by Bangladesh in recent months."

Tariq Altaf, Pakistan's Additional Foreign Secretary (Asia and the Pacific), had summoned Rahim to complain about Bangladesh and said the number of women who lost their modesty by Pakistani occupation forces and the millions of people killed by Pakistani soldiers in 1971 were "historically inaccurate," according to the sources.

It is an established fact that two hundred thousand women were dishonoured and three million people killed in Bangladesh by Pakistani occupation forces during the War of Liberation in 1971.

The Pakistani diplomat was told in clear term that the number of women violated by the Pakistani soldiers and the number of casualties in 1971 genocide were universally accepted figures compiled by Bangladesh authorities and in-

See Page 12 Col 7

Nari Samaj begins hoisting black flags

By Staff Correspondent

The Sammilita Nari Samaj, a platform of women's organisations, yesterday hoisted black flags at Mahakhali and Gulshan and held a protest rally as part of a month-long protest against increasing incidents of repression, murder and rape of children and women.

The Nari Samaj intends to hold protest meeting and hoist black flag at every place in the country where such incidents have taken place.

At Gulshan, they were protesting the brutal killing of Shazneen, a teenaged student at their residence on April 23. Local people helped the Nari Samaj hoist the flags with the

See Page 12 Col 8

Cry for social security, punishment to killers

By Staff Correspondent

More people expressed their grief and solidarity with the family of Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, a 15-year-old schoolgirl murdered in the city on April 23.

People from different walks of life, talking to The Daily Star yesterday, said they felt that the killing of Shazneen was a dastardly act that sent ripples of sadness and shock waves across the country.

News of the gruesome murder came as a great blow and has affected every family having women and children.

"Shazneen was a school-going student who symbolised the hopes and aspirations of young men and women. Through her brutal murder, teenagers have been jolted and shattered in their beliefs, aspirations and surroundings," said an HSC student.

Adnan R Amin, a student of the Notre Dame College, said there is a feeling of great sadness among all school and college-going students.

"The incident has sent shivers among us all and students have been gripped by a sense of insecurity. Those responsible for Shazneen's murder must be given exemplary punishment," he said.

Mishel Ali Khan, a student

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DSE may introduce one-day settlement system by next week

Star Business Report

Stock prices at the Dhaka Stock Exchange rallied yesterday following the Securities and Exchange Commission's decision to introduce 'one-day trading adjustment settlement system' for both the bourses and prohibit 'short selling'.

The DSE Council, at its meeting yesterday accepted the proposed draft of the 'one day trading adjustment settlement system' and it is likely to introduce the new system by next week.

It has sent its proposal to the SEC which will approve the proposed draft, to be followed by a gazette notification.

Meanwhile, the DSE All Share Price Index which had hit a record low, marked a 3.22 per cent rise to 592.94 points from the previous low of 574.39 points. The turnover in volume also surged by 48 per cent to 5.65 lakh from 3.80 lakh.

Among 133 issues traded, 112 gained, 15 incurred losses and prices of six issues remained unchanged.

Rehabilitation yet to start

BCL's 'yes' to return of JCD activists

By DU Correspondent

The Dhaka University authorities could not execute the Syndicate's decision to rehabilitate the displaced activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) in their respective halls yesterday in the face of opposition from Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL).

The Syndicate decided on Friday that the displaced activists of JCD would be rehabilitated in their respective halls after checking their identity cards.

BCL had also supported the decision and assured the university authorities of all cooperation for its implementation.

But BCL unexpectedly changed its stand and opposed the idea of vacating the dormitories for the rehabilitation of JCD activists.

However, BCL later yesterday agreed to accept the Syndicate decision.

The DU authorities yesterday did not take any step to start the rehabilitation process. No JCD activists came to the campus on the day.

The leaders and activists of JCD have been staying outside the campus since April 23 fol-

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CU halls raided: 8 held, arms recovered

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 3: Police launched a pre-dawn raid today on six dormitories of the Chittagong University and arrested eight persons.

During the raid, police recovered one cut-rifle, five guns, two LGs, 28 bullets, two Chinese axes, and five cleavers.

The raid continued from 3-30 am to 9 am, police said.

A news agency quoting police said Shibir activists Mizanur Rahman, A K M Maksudul Alam, Kamaluddin, Shahadat Hossain, Zahidul Islam and Jasimuddin were arrested from Suhrawardy Hall while BCL activist Chapal Majumder and

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Alleged floor-crossing by 2 BNP MPs

Rule on Speaker for refusing to refer dispute to EC

By SC Correspondent

The High Court yesterday directed the Speaker to show cause as to why his refusal to refer the dispute on the alleged floor-crossing by two BNP MPs to the Election Commission, should not be declared illegal and without lawful authority.

The division bench of the HC comprising Justice KM Hasan and Justice Md Latifur Rahman after hearing Barrister Maudud Ahmed, counsel for the writ petitioners, and Attorney General KS Nabi issued the *rule nisi* which is to be returnable within eight weeks.

Khondkar Delwar Hossain, Chief Whip of the Opposition in Parliament, and AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, jointly filed the writ petition.

By the *rule nisi* the court ordered the respondents to show cause as to why the refusal by the Speaker to refer the dispute raised by the petitioners in their letters dated February 11, 1998 and February 18, 1998 respectively to the Election Commission under Article 66(4) of the Constitution to hear and determine the dispute according to Act No 1 of 1981, shall not be declared illegal and without lawful authority.

Md Hasibur Rahman Swapan and Dr Md Alauddin, both BNP MPs, joined the present government on February 9, 1998 and February 17, 1998 respectively. Swapan was made a Deputy Minister and Alauddin was made a State Minister.

Khandkar Delwar Hossain on February 11, 1998 and AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury on February 18, 1998 by separate

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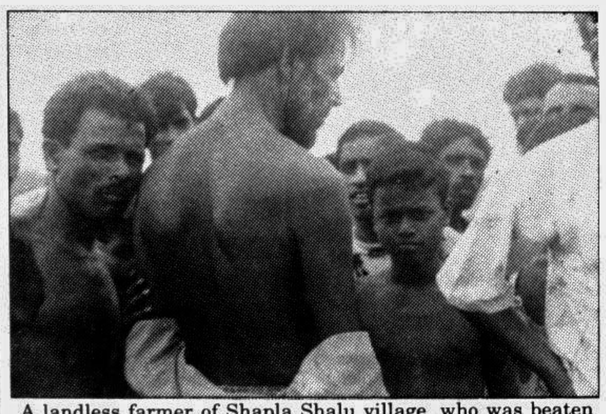
Armed goons unleash reign of terror on landless villagers



A landless farmer of Shapla Shalu village, who was beaten up by hoodlums, showing the injury marks.
— Photo courtesy: Nijera Kori

By Morshed Ali Khan, back from Gaibandha

Khas lands allotted in '92 yet to be handed over to 60 families in Gaibandha

An entire village of landless peasants at Jumarbari union under Shagatha thana of Gaibandha district, has been terrified and besieged by ruffians of local *jotdars* (land sharks; literally meaning owner of a proprietary agricultural farm) because the peasants claimed the *khas* lands they had been given under a government scheme in 1992.

On April 14, the armed ruffians unleashed a reign of terror on the 60 families of the village known as Shapla Shalu Adarsha Gram. The hoodlums indiscriminately beat up helpless men, women and children, killing a mother of two, Kachmoti, 35. Since then, the villagers have remained in extreme fear. Many are even starving as their access to shops or bazaars have been blocked by the ruffians.

Neither the local police nor the TNO based at Bonarpara have done anything to solve the problem, the frustrated local Union Parishad Chairman, freedom fighter Shahjahan Ali Shaju, alleged. He openly blamed the local land administration for the situation in his area.

"None of the officials bothered to visit the place even after the murder of Kachmoti," said Shahjahan. "The land administration, on one hand told the *jotdars* not to move from the land and on the other hand asked the landless to take possession," Shahjahan alleged.

Shapla Shalu grew as a cluster village when the government decided to hand over *khas* lands to the selected landless and destitute families of the locality. Several hundred acres of *khas* land had emerged as the Bangalee river — a tributary of the mighty Jamuna river — died down following construction of a flood protection embankment in the mid-60s.

In paper, each landless family received eight decimal of land for construction of dwelling houses and 38 decimal for agriculture. In 1992 all the 60 families moved to the area and built their dwellings, planting saplings of fruit trees around the cluster village. But there has never been any administrative initiative to hand over the 38 decimal of land to each of these people.

People of the neighboring villages, Mechotte, Kamalerpara, Charpara and Koichara said the influential *jotdars* have always maintained a 'good relationship' with the local administration, assuring their interests.

See Page 12 Col 4

3 dacoits killed in gunfight with police in Sundarbans

BAGERHAT, May 3: Three people were killed and three others, including a policeman received bullet wounds in a gunfight at Dudmukhi Pathuriakhal of the Sundarbans in Sharankhola thana here last night, reports UNB.

The gunfight erupted between the patrol police and a group of robbers.

The dead were identified as Nurul Huq alias Chhotto, 35, Hemayet Farazi, 40, and Chan Boyati, 25. The injured policeman was Mozammel Hossain, 35.

Acting on a tip-off, the patrol police surrounded the al-

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