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# The Daily Star

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## Bandarban hill dist bill passed

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday passed the Bandarban Hill District Local Government Council (Amendment) Bill, 1998 through voice vote and accepted the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council Bill, 1998 for immediate consideration.

The bill on Bandarban hill district, the last in the series of three almost identical bills on the three hill districts, was passed at 9:15 last night with Jatiya Party voting against it. Earlier, two such bills on Rangamati and Khagrachhari hill districts were passed by the House on Sunday and Monday respectively.

After passage of the Bandarban hill district bill, the Jatiya Sangsad accepted the CHT Regional Council Bill for immediate consideration with the main Opposition party, BNP, remaining absent from the proceedings of the House.

BNP walked out of the parliament.

See Page 12 Col 1

## Half-day hartal today

By Staff Correspondent

The six-hour countrywide hartal called by the BNP-led 7-party alliance will begin at 6 am today.

The hartal was called to protest the Speaker's denial to give floor to the Opposition MPs to speak on the CHT bills in the Jatiya Sangsad.

BNP and its six right-wing allies held demonstrations and rallies and torch processions across the country during the last two days to drum up support for today's hartal.

City BNP brought out a torch procession from its office at Nawab Yusuf Market at Nayabazar yesterday evening. BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan led the torch procession.

The procession concluded at the Kakrail Crossing at 7:30 pm after parading various city streets.

A press release of the BNP yesterday said ambulance service, hospital, drug shop, vehicles of police, BDR and other law-enforcing agencies, newspapers and news agencies, emergency electricity supply, WASA and Gas, and the garment factories will remain out of the purview of the half-day hartal.

See Page 12 Col 1

## Bomb attack on BNP procession in Ctg: 5 hurt

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 5: Five BNP activists were injured in bomb explosions when a torch procession, brought out by the party in support of tomorrow's hartal, reached New Market crossing this evening, party sources said.

The injured were rushed to private clinics, party sources informed.

President of the Chittagong chapter of BNP Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin blamed the ruling Awami League for the bomb attack on the torch procession. Awami League denied the charge.

Nasir alleged that the procession led by him came under attack when it reached New Market crossing.

## Inside Today Article

Student politics

**To Ban it or Not to Ban it, That's Not the Question**

Column: Crosscurrents by CAF Dowlah Page 4

## Focus

Threatened coastline: Challenges of 21st century Page 5

## Business

New settlement system becomes uncertain: Dhaka brokers' no to stopping short-selling surprises SEC

DSE price index falls by 4 points Pages 6, 7

## Rescheduling of Beximco loans 'advised' Central bank succumbs to political pressure?

Star Business Report

Strong political pressure may have worked on Bangladesh Bank which has "advised" a private commercial bank to "consider" proposals from Beximco Group for rescheduling its defaulted debts, calculated to be Tk 170 crore till December 1, last year.

Some of these loans have been rescheduled twice in the past, and some thrice.

Responding to a request from the Group, the central bank has told the Arab Bank Bangladesh Branch that the issue be referred to the Board of Directors and that the decisions, according to rules, be made known to the regulators.

Highly-placed sources suggest the central bank move, violative of its own directives, may have been prompted by political high-ups who include several senior ministers and other power brokers.

The suggestion is corroborated by the sequence and the organisation of the whole affair -- the Beximco proposal, its reference to a senior minister, the quick response from the central bank and emergence of a new Beximco company allegedly registered after the central bank's advice had been secured.

The newly-created company called Beximco Property Development and Management Ltd has been proposed to "provide collateral securities in the form of real estate against those rescheduled loans".

The crux of the matter, political pressure aside, is the alleged overnight creation of the company and the over-valuation of the firm's real estate by about five times.

Presenting a repayment schedule, the new Beximco company claimed it had assets -- 150 acres of land in Gazipur -- adjacent to the main road to Dhaka -- worth Tk 175 crore which would be put up as collateral.

According to a deal executed barely a week ago, an acre of land at a similar Gazipur location cost less than Tk 23 lakh. That puts the value of the Beximco property at less than Tk 35 crore.

Even if the Beximco arithmetic was correct, the political pressure element comes out from beneath the carpet.

On February 17, Beximco Group Chairman A S F (Sohel) See Page 12 Col 3

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## BUET deadlock continues

Crisis in BUET deepened yesterday as the teachers and officials of the university abstained from their duties, reports UNB.

The deadlock was created following en masse resignation of Vice Chancellor along with 70 senior teachers including deans and heads of the Departments on Monday.

They alleged government interference in running the university.

Meanwhile, a group of students staged demonstration on the campus yesterday demanding reinstatement of Dr. Iqbal Mahmud as the VC despite opposition from BCL.

A procession brought out from the campus ended in front of the Jatiya Press Club. The students also held a rally there.

The students at the rally announced that they would continue agitation until the government assured them of reinstating Dr. Iqbal.

Earlier, 13 teachers of the faculty of Architecture resigned on April 27 following a dispute over the admission procedure.

Education Minister tells press

## BUET to have new VC if resignation not withdrawn

By Staff Correspondent

Education Minister ASHK Sadique yesterday expressed the hope that the Vice-Chancellor and teachers of BUET who resigned from their administrative posts would withdraw their resignation and help restore normalcy on the campus.

Otherwise, the government may have to appoint a new VC, he told a press conference at the Education Ministry.

Vice-Chancellor Prof. Iqbal Mahmud and 71 teachers resigned from their administrative posts on Monday amid reports of government interference in the affairs of the BUET.

But the education minister refuted the allegation and said Chancellor of the university Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina "did not even exercise her powers conferred on her by the BUET Ordinance of 1961".

Quoting from the Ordinance, the minister said that the Chancellor could take any decision to meet any emergency situation under Section 10(6) of the Ordinance.

The Chancellor did not issue orders as per the Ordinance. Rather, she always wanted a solution on the basis of consensus, he said.

Responding to a question if a new VC would be appointed, Sadique said, "The government will not allow the BUET to become inoperative. The University is run with taxpayers' money. We shall expect an amicable solution and hope that the VC would withdraw his resignation. Otherwise, for restoring normalcy, we may have to appoint a new Vice-Chancellor."

"We shall watch the situation for some time and then go ahead making changes," See Page 12 Col 2

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"We shall watch the situation for some time and then go ahead making changes," See Page 12 Col 2



## Clinton to visit Bangladesh in Nov: US envoy

RAJSHAHI, May 5: US Ambassador to Bangladesh John C. Holzman said here today that President Bill Clinton would visit Bangladesh in November this year, reports BSS.

The US ambassador said the relations between Bangladesh and the United States are growing fast.

Holzman said this while addressing a function at Parjatan Motel here organised by Rotary Club, Rajshahi.

## Rehabilitation of JCD activists at DU halls tomorrow

By DU Correspondent

The displaced activists of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) will be rehabilitated in their respective halls of the Dhaka University tomorrow.

An emergency meeting of the Dhaka University Syndicate took the decision yesterday.

The rehabilitation process would begin at 9 am on the day. The four trouble-torn dormitories of the DU -- Jasimuddin, Surya Sen, Bangabandhu and Ziaur Rahman halls -- will be vacated by noon. The students will then be allowed to enter after.

See Page 12 Col 6

## Ananda Mohan College VP, 4 other BCL activists held

From Our Correspondent

MYMENSINGH, May 5: At least ten people including three policemen were injured in a clash between police and BCL activists in the town today.

Police and witnesses said, the clash took place following the arrest of Mushtaque Ahmed Rumi, Vice President of Ananda Mohan College students union.

Rumi was arrested from his residence early today on charge of ransacking the office of the officer-in-charge of Kotwali Thana last night.

Police said that a group of students led by Rumi attacked Kotwali thana at about 10 pm and ransacked OC's office, demanding release of Makul, Assistant Secretary of district.

See Page 12 Col 6



BUET students brought out a procession in the city yesterday protesting government intervention in BUET affairs. — Star photo

## Prime Minister intervened in BUET affairs: Prof Mahmud

By Mizan Ali

The Prime Minister had intervened for reversal of the BUET Syndicate's decision regarding acceptance of the resignation of 13 teachers of the Architecture Department, said Prof Iqbal Mahmud, who resigned as Vice Chancellor of BUET on Monday.

The Prime Minister had talked to him over telephone on April 28, he said in an interview with The Daily Star yesterday.

In addition, on April 29, the education minister asked the VC to see him. At a meeting on the same day, the minister expressed his annoyance over the Syndicate's decision regarding the 13 teachers, Prof Mahmud said.

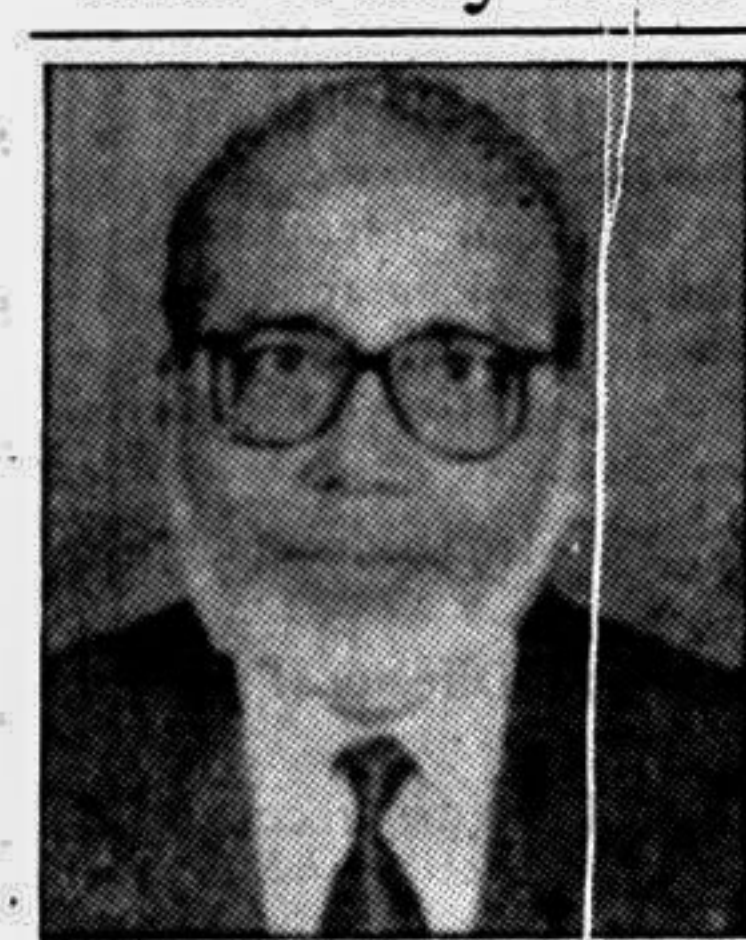
Furthermore, Dr SA Malek, political adviser to the PM, also talked to him over telephone on the same issue on May 4, he said.

"I personally thought there was too much of interference from outside. The situation led me to feel that it would not be possible to take independent decision through properly constituted authorities of the university," Prof Mahmud said.

"I was asked by Dr Malek why the resignation letter of the 13 teachers of the Architecture Department was accepted and that the decision of the Syndicate should be reversed," he said.

"I tried to explain that acceptance of the resignation by the

## Interview with The Daily Star



Prof. Iqbal Mahmud

Syndicate was not part of a disciplinary action against them. The Syndicate had earlier indicated a clear procedure for explaining their position vis-a-vis the issue of resignation. Those teachers, however, refused to follow the procedure."

Some of these 13 teachers had easy access to the highest political quarters which really made things difficult for the university authorities, he said.

"Even informal attempts were made till the very last

## Gulshan Lake: Rajuk suspends all work

By Staff Correspondent

The Rajuk has suspended all work in the Gulshan Lake area following reports of indiscriminate filling up of the lake in The Daily Star.

But Rajuk sources said as per an order issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), recently, Rajuk will now ensure that 'the lake is left untouched. They also said that a legislation was urgently required to protect the lakes, parks, open space and low-lying areas in the city.

Part of the Gulshan Lake area has been grabbed by a section of people, claiming its ownership.

All the four members of Rajuk visited Gulshan area after the Works Ministry asked Rajuk to investigate the matter and report back. The earth-filling of the lake near Baridhara Road-12 for constructing a mosque has come to halt. Rajuk sources said that the already earth-filled area would be turned into a green space.

"We will have to earmark a

little space for the mosque, the rest would be turned into a park," said a Rajuk official.

In a letter to Rajuk Dhaka City Corporation and district administration recently, the PMO prohibited any construction work on the city's parks, playgrounds, open space, natural low-lying areas, canals or lakes. If any such work has been taken up, it must be stopped immediately, it said.

The authorities must let the PM's Office know within 15 days how and why such a work has been taken up. In case of emergency, if any of these areas has to be used, the authorities must seek permission from the Prime Minister, the letter said.

Representatives of different leading developers, who had bought stretches of the lake, were seen at the Rajuk office yesterday. They submitted to the Rajuk Chairman that they had bought the 'lake' from private owners and Rajuk had

See Page 12 Col 2



BNP brought out a torch procession in the city yesterday to drum up support for today's half-day hartal. — Star photo

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Ministry of Information  
Bangladesh Secretariat  
Dhaka  
**Notice**  
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Financial and Technical proposals are hereby invited for establishment and operation of one or more than one Private Television Channel from local or foreign firm individually or under joint venture. Conditions for establishment of Private Television Channel and Technical Schedule will be available on or before May 31, 1998 during office hours from the undersigned on payment of Tk. 1,000/- (Taka one thousand) only (non-refundable) through Pay Order/Bank Draft in favour of Secretary, Ministry of Information.  
Financial and Technical proposals in sealed cover will be received by the undersigned in his office on June 25, 1998 at 11:30 AM. Technical offers will be opened on the same day at 12:00 Noon in presence of the bidders (if they are present) and subsequently the bids will be evaluated by a Technical Committee. Those who have applied earlier, they are also requested to apply again afresh.  
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