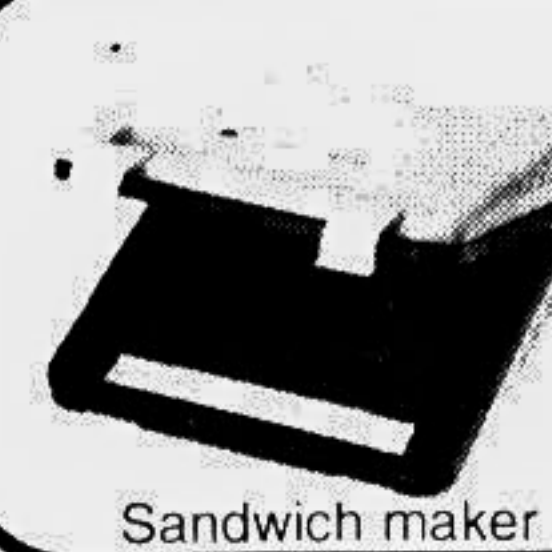


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Life & works of Shaikat Osman

By Staff Correspondent

Shaikat Osman, author of more than 90 books, was born on January 2, 1917 in Sabalshingpur village in the Hooghly district of West Bengal.

He was the eldest of three sons and four daughters of Md. Ahiya and Guljan Begum. He received his early education in Islamic institutions started in school at a village maktab. He attended the madrassah till 1929 and then went to Calcutta to continue his Islamic schooling at Madrassah-e-Alia.

In 1923, he switched to the secular Anglo-Persian division of the institution and in 1934, he got himself admitted to the prestigious St Xavier's College in Calcutta.

Osman's early literary efforts were in poetry. In 1937, he got some of his poems published in the Bulbul, a reputed literary journal. He got married in 1938. He studied Economics in St Xavier's and acquired a BA degree in 1939.

He then studied Bengali language and literature in Calcutta University. After his Masters in 1941, he was able to find a full-time job as a pamphlet writer in the information department of the Bengal Government. In the same year, he was appointed lecturer of Bengali at Calcutta Government Commercial College.

By this time, Shaikat Osman was also writing prose. His early short stories were published in magazines since 1939. His first book was published in 1944. His first novel *Janani* was serialised in Shawgat, a literary monthly, over the next two years. His second novel, *Bani Adam*, was published in the Eid issue of the daily Azad in 1946. These two novels established Osman as a budding Muslim writer.

Although his real name was Sheikh Azizur Rahman, he opted to use his pen-name, Shaikat Osman, as a writer.

Shaikat Osman was drawn to Marxism and he became a member of the Cultural Majlis, a small group of like-minded young poets and writers in 1940.

Osman opted for Pakistan during the partition of India in 1947 and was transferred to the Chittagong Government Commerce College.

Osman did not write a novel for the next 15 years, although he wrote some satirical plays and short stories. He wrote two allegories — *The Laughter of the*

Slave (1962) and the *Serpent King* (1964) — mythical tales set in the cities of Harun-el-Rashid's Bagdad and Zahku's Persia. On March 25, 1971, soldiers billeted in his house in Dhaka, Osman went into exile and immersed himself into the Liberation War.

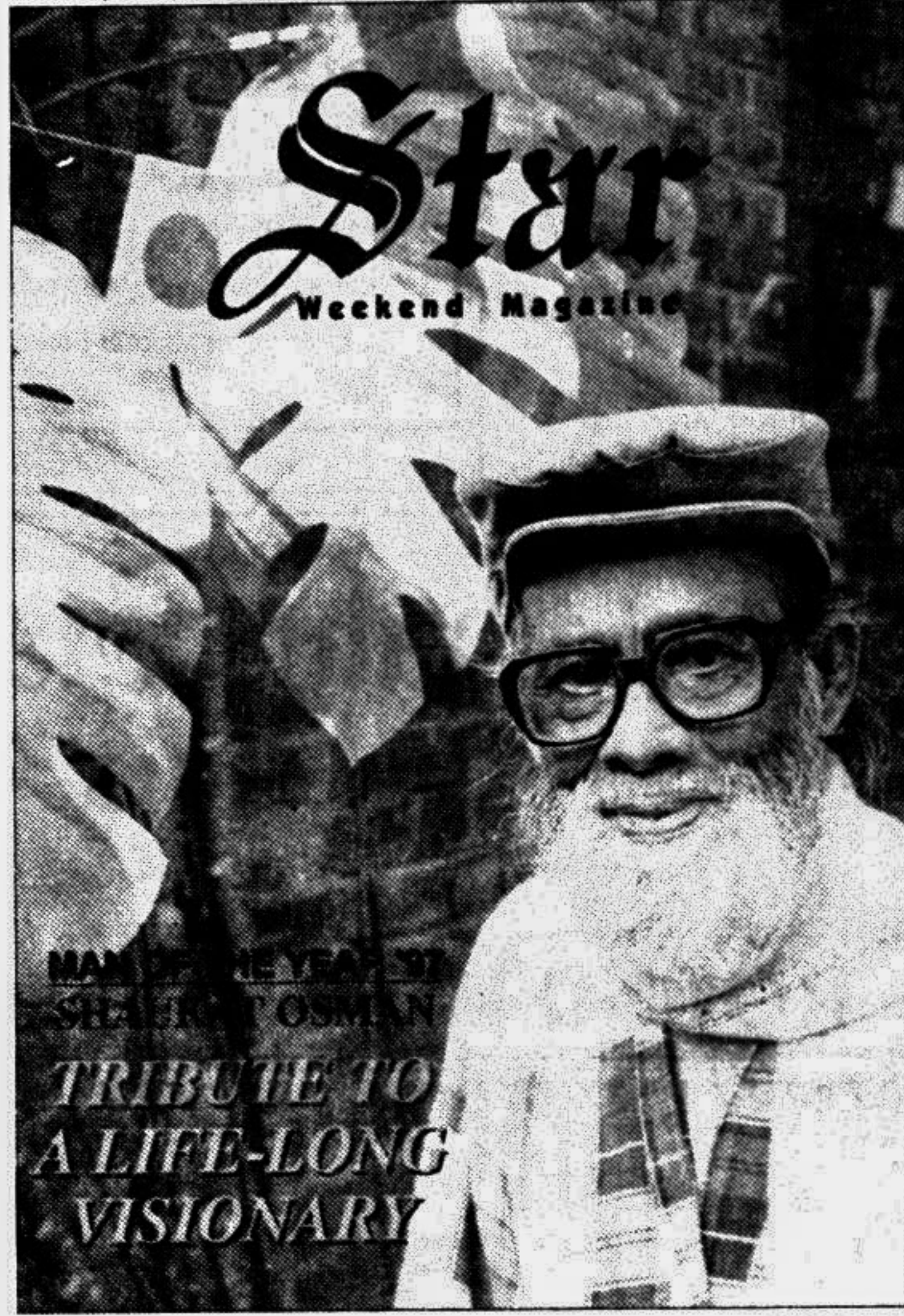
While in exile, he published a 3000-word open letter to Chou En-lai condemning the Chinese support for the Pakistan government which was engaged in one of the most brutal repressions of modern times.

He wrote a novel — *Farewell to Hell* — published in the 1971 Puja issue of weekly the *Desh* and subsequently three more novels on the 1971 theme of repression and sacrifice. This included *Two Soldiers* (1972), *Jolangi* (1973), and *The Wolf Forest* (1974).

Some of his short stories on the 1971 theme were published in a volume called *If You Were Born in Bengal* (1974). The August 15, 1975 assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman left Osman traumatised and he went into exile for the second time until April 1981. During these years, he kept a diary, an edited version of which was published in 1983 titled *Mujib Nagar: A Sequel*.

Shaikat Osman received the Independence Award in 1997. Two of his novels, *Janani* and *Kritadasher Hashi*, were translated and published by Penguin Books.

The Daily Star declared him 'Man of the Year for 1997' and a few months back Star weekend magazine had a cover story on the life and works of this prolific writer.



Shaikat Osman dead

From Page 1
The Baitul Mokarram Mosque after Jum'a prayers today and he will be buried at the Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard at Mirpur.

Earlier, when the health condition of the writer was deteriorating, a medical board was constituted at the directive of the prime minister, headed by Prof. Timothy Lee of the National University Hospital in Singapore, to examine him.

In a condolence message, President Shahabuddin Ahmed expressed his deep shock and profound grief at the death of the octogenarian litterateur. The President recalled Shaikat Osman's glorious literary career and said that his contribution in the development of Bengali literature is praiseworthy.

The President conveyed his heart-felt sympathy to the members of the bereaved family and prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul.

The Prime Minister expressed deep shock at the death of the eminent litterateur. Sheikh Hasina said the nation has lost an elderly guardian in the death of Shaikat Osman, a vanguard of the Liberation War.

"The loss is irreparable," she said.

Different socio-cultural and political organisations and individuals condoled the death of Shaikat Osman.

Messages of condolence were issued by the Samannoi Committee, Muktiyoddha Smriti Sangrakshak Sangsad, Ekattur Ghatik Dal Nirmul Committee, Prof. Abdul Mannan, Vice-Chancellor of Chittagong University, Shishu Sahitya Parishad, Mujibnagar

Three new NEC members of BNP

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday nominated three leaders to different positions of the party's National Executive Committee, reports UNB.

Md. Shahjahan, MP (Noakhali-4) was nominated to the post of Organising Secretary while Sayed Wahidul Alam, MP (Chittagong-5) as Assistant Organising Secretary and A U Ahmed of ...ulna as its member, said a press release.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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PM warns

From Page 1

the thana health complex of her ancestral home Tungpara, doctors are not available most of the time.

More than 3,000 posts of doctors have been created and steps taken to fill up the vacant posts in the medical colleges, she said, adding steps have also been taken to appoint 4,000 nurses on emergency basis.

Earlier, the Prime Minister distributed BMA awards to eight doctors for their contribution to the liberation war, democracy movement, health sector and organisational activities.

The BMA awards were given to Shaheed Dr. Abdul Alim Chowdhury (posthumous), Shaheed Dr. Shamsuddin Ahmed (posthumous), Late Dr. A K Mansur, Late Dr. Ali Hafiz Selim, Shaheed Dr. Shamsul Alam Khan Milon, Dr. Sarwar Ansari, Dr. Sultan Ahmed Chowdhury and Dr. Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin.

The committee also suggested computerising the press and printing system in BG Press, and deploying personnel from the law enforcing agencies to ensure security and safety.

Housewife beaten to death in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, May 14: A housewife was beaten to death allegedly by her husband at Garamara village in Bashkhal thana here today, reports UNB.

Police said Faridul Alam hit her wife Morshedha with an iron rod as she refused to bring Tk 50,000 from her father as dowry. She died on the spot.

Neighbours said during the last five years of their marriage, Alam often forced her wife to bring money from her father.

Later, Farid was arrested by police.

Khaleda

From Page 1

for protecting the country's independence. "If this government remains in power, the country will be destroyed and it will become subservient."

"This government is not doing anything for the welfare of the people, there is no plan for improving the lot of common man," she said.

They are only busy with corruption and nepotism, and politicising everything, Begum Zia alleged.

Dwelling on the economic situation, she said the country is on the verge of collapse. Everything from mills, factories and business establishments to educational institutions are facing ruin, she added.

UN deplors

From Page 1

Tokyo's ambassador from New Delhi.

Calling India's nuclear tests unacceptable, China's foreign minister has urged governments worldwide to pressure New Delhi to abandon its nuclear weapons programme, a Chinese official said today.

Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan, in a telephone call with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on Wednesday, said China was 'deeply shocked' at India's latest nuclear tests.

After five nuclear explosions in three days, India says it plans no more tests, even if neighbour and rival Pakistan conducts its own test.

An Indian official close to Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, speaking on condition of anonymity Wednesday, said India had already taken Pakistan's possible response into account.

Titans Gas

From Page 1

Court. Billal, a supervisor at the Titans Gas head office in Kawranbazar, was killed allegedly by his rivals at the office on July 9, 1992.

Probe body recommends setting up of CCTV cameras at BG Press

A police inquiry committee has recommended setting up of CCTV cameras in the confidential wing of the BG Press and recording the wing's managers to avert leakage of question papers and other important documents, reports UNB.

The 5-member committee formed following the leakage of SSC question papers last month, submitted its five-point recommendations to the Education Ministry recently.

At present, some 125 employees are working in the confidential wing of the BG Press and the number is too much to maintain secrecy, committee sources said.

There is every chance of question paper leakage if the section remains over-stuffed, they said.

The committee also suggested computerising the press and printing system in BG Press, and deploying personnel from the law enforcing agencies to ensure security and safety.

It further suggested that more senior officials of the press should be involved in supervising the printing, binding and packaging of any sensitive documents like the question papers.

The committee also identified the negligence of the BG Press officials and employees as one of the major causes of question leak-out.

Ministers advised not to visit Barisal-5 constituency

The Chief Election Commissioner, Muhammad Abu Hena, has advised ministers, state and deputy ministers, and any other individual of equal status not to pay any official or unofficial visit to Barisal-5 Constituency till the holding of the by-election there, an official handout said yesterday, reports BSS.

The advice was given to keep all activities related to the by-election above all controversy, it added.

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The home minister and his delegation members met the Interpol chief Raymond Kandell and high officials of France and discussed the modernisation of the police and fire service department.

The minister later visited London and exchanged views with the British Secretary of State for Home Jack Straw and his deputy Michael Brand.

Replying to a reporter's question on Surat Miah murder at Zia International Airport (ZIA), the home minister said the case is under re-investigation and the accused must be put under trial immediately.

Dr. Alamgir told a questioner that the government was expecting foreign assistance for implementing the development plans for the CHT. In case of non-availability of such assistance, the government itself would mobilise the funds. He mentioned that the government has already started discussions with the development partners.

Releasing a fact-sheet on the ministrywide plans for development of the CHT various sectors, the state minister said the government has attached top priority to development of communication network as it was a pre-requisite for development of other sectors.

Dr. Alamgir told another questioner that the government was still maintaining restriction on foreigners' visit to the CHT area, apprehending that the opponents of the peace accord might create a situation. But the restriction will be lifted soon, he said.

Suranjit Sengupta said implementation of the CHT peace accord will start soon after the President assents to the bills in this regard.

BUET teachers to submit memo to PM

By Staff Correspondent

A general meeting of the BUET Teachers' Association yesterday resolved to hold a silent procession and march towards the Prime Minister's Secretariat to handover a memorandum next week.

The meeting held on the tenth day of teachers' strike at the university, also reiterated support for the eight-point demand of BUETTA.

BUETTA president Prof. Abdur Razzak presided over the four-hour-long general meeting of the Association held at the seminar room of the Civil Engineering Department yesterday.

Talking to The Daily Star, Prof. Akand said, "The silent procession of the BUET teachers will march around the university premises following which the teachers will proceed towards the Prime Minister's Secretariat to handover the memorandum."

Prof. Akand, however, did not specifically mention when the silent procession would be brought out.

The BUETTA called an indefinite teachers' strike at the university after the resignation by Prof. Iqbal Mahmud from the post of vice-chancellor and 71 teachers from their administrative posts on May 4 last.

Demand of the Association include allowing Prof. Iqbal Mahmud to resume his duties as the VC of BUET and an assurance from the highest authorities regarding non-interference in the university affairs.

Home Minister

From Page 1

Hashem Mridha could not be traced.

Rafiq said the Interpol authorities told him that they will take steps against the absconders.

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Rape victim handcuffed

From Page 1

people but they denied me justice. Several times, Alam tortured me, none dared to say anything because he is a notorious terrorist of the area," she said.

Sitting on her hospital bed with one hand tied to it and a female jail guard hanging around nearby, a pale-looking Bakul said that in the early morning of May 1, a fisherman found her unconscious by the river bank. "I don't know his name. He took me to a nearby house but the inmates refused to help me. Then the man took me to a field nearby and poured water on my head."

When several people and some Ansars gathered there, Bakul was sent to Savar thana. She said she was so sick that she could not even walk. The OC of Savar thana then sent her to the spots in a police car along with police personnel.

Bakul went on "Police left me near my house after Alam's father told them that he was not around. A number of people had gathered there seeing the police presence. When police left, Alam's

father offered me one hundred taka and told me to forgive his son and leave Savar immediately."

She said she refused to accept the money and went to the thana again. This time the OC recorded a case. Then she was sent to Savar Thana Health Complex.

The jail guards beside her

said the government has failed to provide security to women and children.

Nari Samaj

From Page 1

said the government has failed to provide security to women and children.

Expressing frustration, a Nari Samaj leaders said "No rapist has been punished yet and the rape incidents are on alarming rise. We do not want to hear mere assurance in the Parliament, we want that the culprits are punished and oppressions come to an end."

Among others, Nari Samaj leaders Shireen Akhter, Farida Akhter, Dr. Naila Khan, Seema Das Shimu, Khaleda Khatun, Lopa Ahmed and Nahid Akhter took part in the demonstrations and the rallies.

BNP urges govt

From Page 1

liberation regime and for a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing.

The statement said that it is necessary to formulate a firm and responsible national posture taking into account the dangers of the tests being posed to the sub-continent as a whole.

bed at the DMCH said that on May 10, Bakul was brought to safe custody of Dhaka Central Jail and the doctor referred her to the DMCH. Ever since she has been handcuffed to her bed.

At the DMCH, Bakul was being addressed as an *ashami* (accused) by all others around her. A hospital staff who came to serve food in Ward 16 said, "Give this *ashami* some more food, she is pregnant." When asked how she felt being handcuffed to the bed, Bakul gave a blank look and replied, "I do not understand."

When contacted, the IO, Khandakar Ayub Hossain of Savar thana, said that police had arrested two persons in this connection on May 1. They were identified as Mujibur Rahman, 30 and Sohel, 25, both from Ullail area. Two others — Alam and Mintu were absconding. Hossain said that the arrested were on a remand until Saturday (tomorrow) and a case has been filed under Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, 1995. He said that Bakul was under safe custody and was under treatment at the Dhaka Central Jail.

Kibria

From Page 1
BNP lawmaker Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury suggested expansion of tax base by bringing people of different professional groups, mainly the lawyers and doctors, under the tax net. "Road tax and bridge taxes for motor vehicles should be raised," he said.

S M Akram MP of Awami League urged the government to make its role clear about the capital market. "Why the government should shoulder the responsibility to stabilise the capital market? Leave it to the private sector to determine the ideal price index," he said.

He also proposed lowering tax rate to bring more people under the purview of tax.

Peace march

From Page 1

criticised by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and other leaders of the ruling party.

Reacting to the opposition programme, the PM said in the Jatiya Sangsad on Wednesday that the long march would go in vain while Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed said the programme was designed to obstruct the on-going trial of Bangabandhu's killers.

Addressing a press conference in the city yesterday, Prime Minister's Parliamentary Affairs Adviser Suranjit Sengupta said the people of CHT may go for a peace march the same day the BNP's long march is planned for.

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