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Donors' confce on CHT development next month

A high-level donors' conference on the development of the Chittagong Hill Tracts will be held in the city by the end of June, reports UNB.

Official sources said the conference will discuss funding by donors to implement a massive development plan for the region.

Meanwhile, a 'need assessment committee' of the joint group of government and representatives of the development partners has finalised a need assessment report.

The report was submitted to the joint group and also to the government on Thursday.

Sources said that before finalising the report, the need assessment committee had visited the CHT region and assessed the development needs of the area.

They also met with Jyotirindra Bodhipriyo Lama alias Shantu Lama, the chief of Parbatya Chattogram Jana

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We have a big bomb now: Vajpayee Delhi won't hesitate to use N-arms

NEW DELHI, May 15: Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee today warned that India would not hesitate to unleash nuclear weapons if it was attacked, reports agencies.

The Prime Minister told some 500 cheering Hindu nationalist supporters at his residence: "We won't utilise our nuclear weapons against others."

"But if we are attacked, we will not hesitate in using them for defence."

India has become a nuclear arms state in possession of a 'big bomb', Vajpayee said in a magazine interview.

"India is now a nuclear weapons state," Vajpayee told the India Today in an interview. "We have a big bomb now for which (a) necessary command and control system is also in place."

Vajpayee also said imposition of sanctions on India for conducting nuclear tests "cannot and will not hurt us" and ruled out signing the "discriminatory" Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Vajpayee further said India had an "immense reservoir of resources" to withstand the pressure of punitive measures.

"If we tap this reservoir, the benefit will be hundred times more than any price that we may have to pay in the short-term," he said.

Asked to comment on United States' insistence on India to sign CTBT, Vajpayee said there was no question of accepting any treaty that is discriminatory in nature. No one should have any illusion on this score.

Declaring that India would not be cowed down by sanctions, Vajpayee said the government would present its case before the international community—both bilaterally and in multilateral bodies—and expressed confidence that "our argument would be appreciated by more and more people."

Russia, England and France have shown a commendable sense of realism in their response, he pointed out.

He said sanctions did not stand the scrutiny of logic or fairness and pointed out that some of the countries which imposed sanctions had themselves conducted far more nuclear tests than India and stockpiled nuclear weapons with delivery system.

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Gazipur dist JP council ends in pandemonium

GAZIPUR, May 15: The annual council of Gazipur District Jatiya Party today ended in a pandemonium over the announcement of the name of new general secretary, reports UNB.

The council session was held at Chondona High School ground. JP secretary general Najdur Rahman Monju was present as chief guest.

The trouble started at about 8 pm when the name of the new general secretary Mahmud Hashem Hassan was announced.

Witnesses said a section of JP activists staged protests and chanted various slogans against the 101-member new

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Loadshedding paralyses life in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, May 15: Severe loadshedding has almost paralysed life in Khulna city and in the industrial belt here.

Besides disrupting industrial production, loadshedding is causing serious problems in hospitals and clinics, creating crisis in water supply in the city and forcing closure of most of the shopping complexes after sunset.

Sources in the local office of the Power Development Board said only 48 megawatt electricity was supplied from Goalpara Power Station in two days, Wednesday and Thursday, against a daily requirement of 285 megawatt in Khulna Zone.

Besides, five out of six units of the Khulna Power Station are now out of order due to major mechanical faults, the sources said.

BNP executive committee meets today

By Staff Correspondent

An emergency meeting of the national executive committee of BNP will be held at the party's central office today at 5 pm.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has requested executive committee members to attend the meeting on time, says a press release.

UNB adds: The national council of Jatiyatabadi Krishak Dal will be held at the Engineers' Institution at 10 am today.

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia will attend the council as chief guest.

Escalating Tensions in the Sub-Continent

by Dr A R Chowdhury

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Star Literature

Poem: An elegy for a cow; Fiction: The back square; and Book Review: Hasan Azizul Huq's 'Ma-Meyer Sansar' Pages 8 & 9

Business

Reduce telecom tariffs in SAARC region, achieve uniformity: Experts Page 6

Pakistan is in no haste, says Sharif

ISLAMABAD, May 15: Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said today Pakistan was in 'no haste' to conduct a nuclear test following this week's Indian nuclear explosions, reports AFP.

"We have the capability and we did not test the bomb for the last 15 or 20 years," Sharif said before meeting a visiting high-level US delegation.

"We are in no haste to test the bomb immediately after India tested the bomb," the Prime Minister told state television.

But a New York Times report citing US officials said, Pakistan is preparing an underground nuclear test as early as Sunday.

Citing information gathered from spy satellites, foreign agents and Pakistan's political leaders, the US diplomatic, military and intelligence officials said that Pakistan was readying to explode a nuclear warhead next week at its desert test site, the Times said.

A Washington report says, US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott failed to win assurances from Pakistan today that it will refrain from carrying out a tit-for-tat response to the US delegation.

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Three countries set to close down Dhaka missions

By M Anwarul Haq

Three countries are closing down their resident missions in Bangladesh shortly, according to diplomatic sources.

The countries are Belgium, Brazil and Hungary.

The embassies of Brazil and Hungary have already stopped normal operations while the Belgian embassy is preparing to close down by the end of this month.

All the three countries have cited 'budgetary constraints' as the main reason for their decision to wind up their diplomatic missions in Dhaka. The sources, however, said Dhaka's failure to convince the countries concerned or lack of "diplomatic reciprocity" may have led to closure of the missions.

This is for the first time that three important countries, almost simultaneously, are closing down their resident missions in Bangladesh.

With the closing down of the three missions, the number of foreign resident missions in Dhaka will come down to 46.

Diplomatic observers said that the winding up of the three missions could seriously affect Bangladesh's access to these countries, hampering both trade and diplomacy in the long term.

The closure of Belgian mission is likely to cause delay and facilitation problems for the country's business circles, particularly in the garments and shrimp export sectors besides reducing access to the European Union headquarters in Brussels. Business with Hungary, which was an important trading partner and is now one of the fastest growing economies of Eastern Europe may be affected by the winding up of its resident mission.

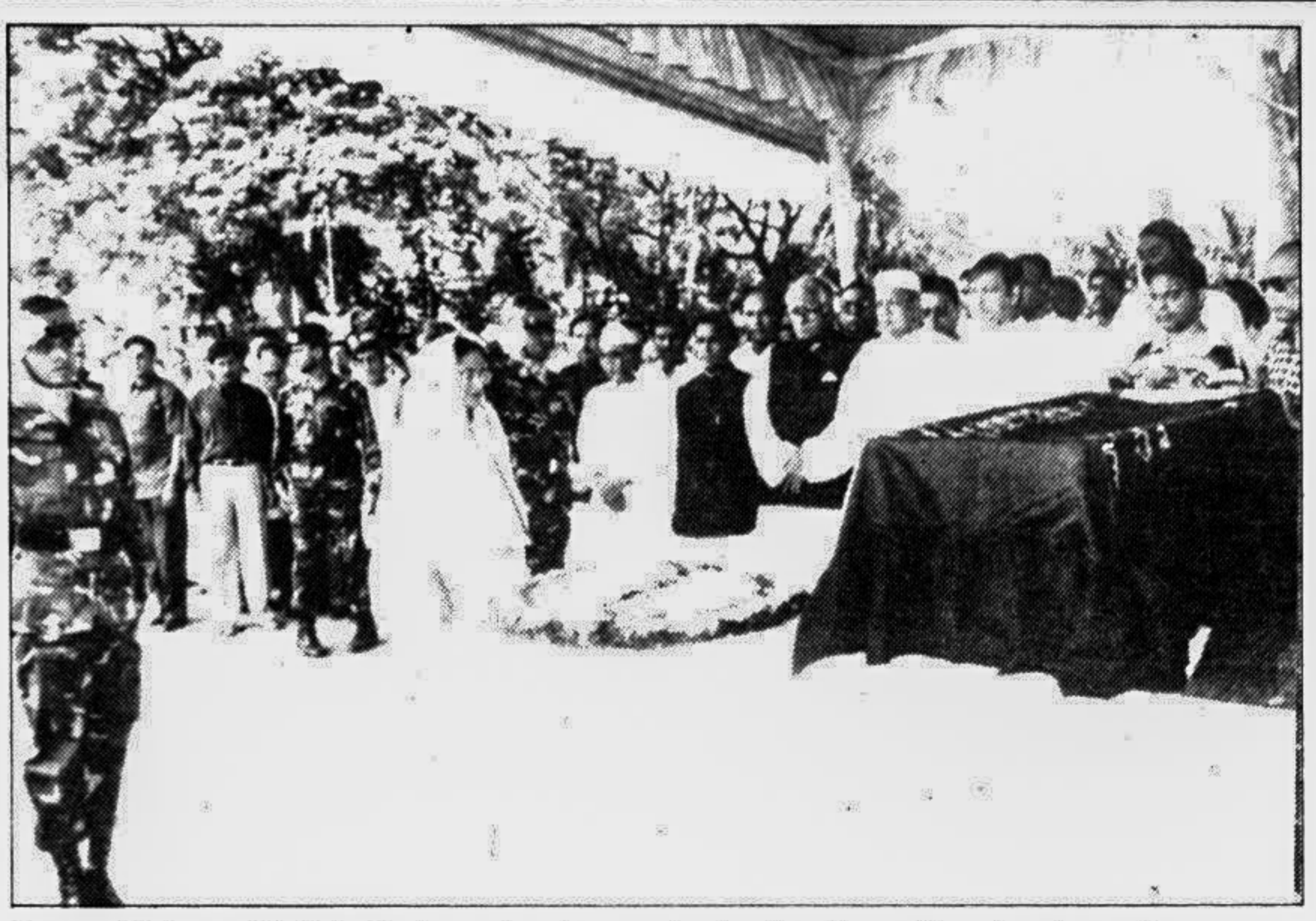
After the closure of the Brazilian embassy, Bangladesh would cease to have the direct access or presence of any South American diplomatic mission.

The Belgian government had conveyed to the authorities in Dhaka its decision to close down or downgrade its mission when its ambassador to Bangladesh Ms Cristina Finster Noppen met Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad in Dhaka in February. Noppen who is the Belgian envoy to Thailand is concurrently accredited to Bangladesh.

The Belgian government



Indonesian police dragging motorcycles away from flames after rioters set fire to Matraman Police Station in Jakarta on Thursday. — AP/UNB photo



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina placed wreaths beside the coffin of eminent litterateur Shaukat Osman at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday. —PID photo

Shaukat Osman laid to rest

By Staff Correspondent

Eminent litterateur Shaukat Osman was laid to rest at Mirpur Martyr Intellectuals' Graveyard yesterday afternoon.

The namaz-e-janaza was held at Baitul Mukarram Mosque after Jumma prayers.

The mortal remains, covered by wreaths, were then taken by an ambulance from Baitul Mukarram Mosque to the Mirpur graveyard.

Political leaders, academics, journalists, cultural personalities and a host of relatives and admirers of late Shaukat Osman attended the janaza.

Commerce Minister Tofael Ahmed, Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak, Education Minister A S H K Sadeq, Awami League presidium members

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Shazneen murder CID suspects involvement of more than one person

By Staff Correspondent

The CID continued its investigation into suspected involvement of any abettor to Shahid, the prime accused in the Shazneen murder at Gulshan in the city on April 23.

The investigating team yesterday again questioned maids Parvin, Minu and four carpenters at the residence of Shazneen's father, Latifur Rahman.

"Investigation may take some time more," said a CID official, adding that they were still suspecting involvement of more than one person in the murder.

The youngest daughter of the

See Page 12 Col 5

Quack's treatment costs life of a minor boy

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, May 15: A quack and his son had been absconding following the death of an eight-year old boy due to wrong treatment by them in Kanaighat thana yesterday.

Solaiman, son of Ishuk Ali of village Nidanpur, who was suffering from dental ailments, went to Haque Pharmacy at Kanaighat at 11 am yesterday. Faisal Haq, owner of the pharmacy and his son Abul Haq pushed as many as five injections named 'Jesokine' in his gum and hip as preparations for extracting tooth. The boy immediately felt unconscious and was rushed to local Thana Health Complex where doctors declared him dead.

A case has been filed with the Kanaighat thana accusing the quack of wrong treatment that led to death of the boy.

Young man hacked to death in city

By Staff Correspondent

A young man was hacked to death by unidentified assailants at Manikganj under Shabubagh thana in the city late Thursday night.

Police identified the dead as Mizan, 23, son of Abdul Kalam of Manikganj area. The motive behind the murder could not be known immediately.

Police said, an unidentified man called Mizan from a roadside shop at about 10:30 pm.

Mizan, who ran a tea stall at Manikganj, went with the man. About half-an-hour later, he was found lying in front of a house in the locality with deep cut marks in his head and his back, police said.

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3 Orion Infusion projects Serious discrepancies in rights share offer

By Inam Ahmed and M Shamsur Rahman

Serious discrepancies have been found in the rights share offer of Orion Infusion, the public limited company, which is now embroiled in a number of irregularities in the capital market.

The company, at its annual general meeting, said it is offering a 50 per cent rights share to invest in three projects.

"We are planning to set up a joint venture 100 per cent export-oriented mushroom farm at Savar, to manufacture medical grade specialised PVC bags used for I.V. fluids and to carry out BMRE of a leased joint venture project for manufacturing head lamp cover for cars on a buy-back basis," is how the company Managing Director put it to the shareholders.

But the investors were shocked when they were sent rights share document. It said, "The purpose of raising the money is to repay part of loans taken from banks so as to adjust these loans and to reduce interest expenses."

When asked, SEC's legal advisor MA Ali said the watchdog cannot do anything against the company for changing the purpose of rights share offer. He said SEC had a guideline which was grossly inadequate to check such illegal activities of companies. A new rights share rule has now been formulated, but in MA Ali's opinion, SEC cannot take action against Orion because the company offered rights share before the formulation of the rule.

But the investors were more shocked when the Tk 10 crore rights share offer went mostly unsubscribed. Only Tk 40 lakh rights shares were subscribed by general investors and the rest Tk 9.60 crore was supposed to be purchased by the MD as the underwriter for the rights shares.

Managing Director Obaidul Karim has not bought a single unsubscribed rights share saying, he does not have money. Experts say, SEC should have checked whether the underwriter had sufficient funds to execute his commitment.

A Daily Star investigation revealed the market was rife with inside information about

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Setback at Bibiana well Occidental urged to stop further drilling

Star Report

US company Occidental, which has faced a setback in drilling an exploratory well in Bibiana due to an accident at a depth of 4005 meters, has been suggested by Petrobangla to stop further drilling there and to look for gas within that depth.

Sources said that Occidental had planned to drill 4400 meters, but its prime target was set at around 3500 meters.

Occidental suspended its drilling operations early last month when the drilling string got stuck up at a depth of 4005 meters. Sources said that within this depth, Occidental had found four gas zones. But it was hoping to find a bigger zone at around 4400 meters.

After nearly 20 days of continuous efforts to recover the drilling string, Occidental approached Petrobangla for an approval to by-pass the 'affected zone' in the well and to proceed with its plan to drill 4400 meters.

Last week, Occidental tried to convince the Petrobangla that it should be allowed to drill 4,400 meters by through a 'bypass' method.

This proposal was unofficially brushed aside by Petrobangla. It suggested Occidental to test the sand of the already found four gas zones. Petrobangla said that since some gas zones have already been found, there is no reason why Occidental should risk its operation further.

The sources said, "Petrobangla was disturbed" by Occidental's delay in seeking such a decision which should have been taken within a week of the incident. "One day's suspension of drilling work costs us between 30,000 and 60,000 dollars," said a source.

Petrobangla officials told Occidental that the US company should go for deeper drilling only if the existing four gas zones do not show much promise. These structures have been found up to a depth of 3970 meters, sources added.

Convinced by Petrobangla, Occidental officials agreed to bring in the 'gas testing programme'.

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Rape victim's handcuff removed

By Staff Correspondent

Bakul (not her real name) handcuff has been removed.

Following newspaper reports yesterday, a group of about six officials accompanied by an uniformed jail official visited Bakul at the DMCH and removed her handcuff.

Bakul, a 20-year-old gangrape victim is now in safe custody of police. She had been handcuffed to her hospital bed since May 10. She is at an advanced stage of pregnancy. She was gangraped by four men in Savar on April 30.

Other patients at the DMCH ward yesterday said that after arrival, the officials were talking to the prison guards at the hospital 'angrily'. "Who handcuffed her? She is not an accused," the patients quoted the officials as saying.

Bakul told this correspondent yesterday that she was feeling much better. "Several women from some organisations came to see me. Now I know that they have not arrested me, I am under their protection," she said.

Free her from safe custody: SNS

By Staff Correspondent

Sammita Nari Samaj has demanded release of Bakul (not her real name) from 'safe custody' and her protection and rehabilitation.

Nari Samaj in a statement yesterday also condemned Bakul's treatment as a 'criminal' and urged the Home Minister to take urgent steps to arrest Alam and Mintu.

The statement was signed by Shaheen Anam, Naila Khan, Farida Akhtar and Khaleda Khatun on behalf of Nari Samaj.

Bakul, a young girl, was raped recently by a gang of four at Savar. She was later admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) by jail authorities under 'safe custody' but was handcuffed to her hospital bed.

Her handcuff was removed following a report in The Daily Star yesterday.

Members of Nari Samaj yesterday visited Bakul at DMCH following the report.

Bakul told the Nari Samaj leaders that she wanted proper treatment and protection and that she did not want to go back to jail, the statement said. She narrated her story to them and said that she did not understand why, being a complainant, she should be in jail.

Dipu murder Main accused arrested

By JU Correspondent

Saful Islam, a former student of Jahangirnagar University (JU) and the main accused in the murder of Jatiyatabadi Chattrra Dal (JCD) leader Swakat Kabir Dipu, was arrested with a country-made pigeon on Wednesday, Savar police said yesterday.

Saful was caught by some activists of Bangladesh Chattrra League (BCL) on the campus and handed over to the Savar police in presence of Proctor Asfar Ahmed and Provost of Kamaluddin Hall Dr Syed Sabir

See Page 12 Col 3

250 killed overnight: Foreigners leaving Jakarta

Major faction in ruling party revolts against Suharto

JAKARTA, May 15: A major faction of President Suharto's political party today turned against the embattled leader, further jeopardising his rule. Fires set by rioters killed over 250 people, report agencies.

Foreigners carrying hastily packed suitcases stampeded out of the riot-torn capital, where rescue workers removed charred bodies from shopping malls gutted by fire.

The US Embassy in Jakarta chartered two jumbo jetliners to fly Americans and immediate family members out of the increasingly threatening capital. They were scheduled to leave for Bangkok or Singapore early Saturday, and other countries were expected to follow suit.

US President Bill Clinton lamented "destructive develop-

250 killed overnight: Foreigners leaving Jakarta Major faction in ruling party revolts against Suharto

ments" in Indonesia but said the question of President Suharto stepping down is up to the Indonesian people.

"What we do believe is important is that the president find a way to open a dialogue with all those in society and that it lead to genuine social and political reform," Clinton said.

Suharto, 76, held a frantic series of meetings, at which he cut big price increases on gasoline and other essential fuels that helped trigger to anger behind four days of deadly riots.

Suharto also ordered a crackdown on unrest. He told the military and the government to take action against rioters and looters.

With Suharto's leadership pushed to the brink, all eyes were on Indonesia's mighty military leaders, all of them groomed by Suharto.

In a television address, Lt Gen Prabowo, the president's headline son-in-law, said there was no split within the armed forces, and repeated threats to take firm action against rioters.

Many office buildings were nearly empty. Trading in the country's plunging currency, the rupiah, was halted. Banks, many of which were ransacked the day before, were closed.

Suharto's spokesman said today it was "not a problem" for the embattled Indonesian leader to step down, if people have lost confidence in him.

Kosgoro, one of the major factions within Suharto's ruling Golkar party, issued a statement demanding Suharto return the presidential man-

See Page 12 Col 7

Killing at Motijheel: None arrested yet

By Staff Correspondent

Police could not arrest anyone till yesterday in connection with the killing of a businessman at Motijheel in the city Thursday evening.

The victim, Hannan, 32, who hailed from Keraniganj, was shot dead because of previous enmity, police suspected.

After preliminary investigation, Motijheel police said the killers were more than five in number and one of them shot Hannan at about 6:30 pm. Then they ran away.