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VOL. VIII NO. 209 REGD. NO. DA 781

INTERNET: <http://www.dailystarnews.com>

BHADRA 9, 1405 BS

DHAKA MONDAY AUGUST 24, 1998

RABIUS SAANI 30, 1419 HUIRI

16 PAGES : PRICE TAKA 6.00

# The Daily Star

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## 5-day drive No BNP MP deposited resignation letter on first day

By Staff Correspondent

A special 5-day drive to collect the resignation letters of BNP MPs yielded 'zero result' on the first day yesterday.

No BNP MP turned up at the office of the Chief Whip where a party whip, Major (Retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed, was assigned to receive such letters on the first day of the drive to push the party decision of depositing the resignation letters of party MPs with the BNP chief.

When contacted last night, Major (Retd) Hafiz confirmed that the submission of BNP MPs' resignation letters at the Opposition Chief Whip's office was nil on the day.

Following a directive by BNP chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleida Zia to speed up the process of depositing the resigna-

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## JS body terms Atia forest ordn '82 'faulty'

By Staff Correspondent

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Forests and Environment yesterday observed that the Atia Forest (preservation) Ordinance, 1982 is a 'faulty' one and it should be amended.

The ordinance governs various aspects of Atia forest spread over areas including Shakhupur, Mirzapur, Madhupur and Bhaluka.

Kader Siddiki, an Awami League MP from Tangail and a member of the parliamentary body, told The Daily Star last night that the committee had decided to convert the ordinance into a complete law 'removing its inconsistencies'.

In this regard, the committee has asked the secretary of the ministry to submit a report, accommodating the suggestions of the MPs concerned, within a month, meeting sources said.

Meanwhile, the ministry officials informed the JS body that some 29,201 metric tons of rubber worth over Tk 135 crore have so far been produced in the

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## Yeltsin sacks entire govt

MOSCOW, Aug 23: Russian President Boris Yeltsin sacked the entire Russian government today, the Kremlin said, reports AFP.

Ex-premier Viktor Chernomyrdin, 60, who was sacked in March to make way for 35-year-old technocrat Sergei Kiriyenko, was named Interim Prime Minister, a Kremlin official said.

The decision ends Kiriyenko's five-month tenure as premier marked by an unprecedented economic crisis which reached its peak last Monday when the government was forced to effectively devalue the ruble and default on its domestic debts.

According to the text of the presidential decree released by the Kremlin, Yeltsin declared the government of the Russian federation has resigned.

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Army personnel were sent to clear a traffic jam near Sonargaon on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway yesterday after some portions of the road went under waist deep flood waters (left) and stranded passengers at Kanchpur trying to avail boats to go to their destinations.

—Star photo

## Flood situation grim in 14 districts

# Capital's road links with Ctg, Sylhet snapped

By Staff Correspondent

The worsening flood situation in central districts of the country snapped the capital's road communication with Chittagong and Sylhet yesterday as knee to waist deep water was flowing over the highways at several points, officials said.

Surging waters were flowing over the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway between Daudkandi and Madanganj and the Dhaka-Sylhet road at Shabazzpur near Brahmanbaria.

Army engineers were rushed to clear a huge traffic jam near Sonargaon on the busy Dhaka-Chittagong highway, created after three trucks became stranded falling to cope with surging water.

All Dhaka-bound vehicular transports have been halted at Daudkandi and the Chittagong-

bound transports have been detained at the northern end of the Meghna bridge.

Travellers to and from the city were using engine boats to cross the flooded portions of the highways, witnesses said. Boatmen churned out a good profit.

Road communication in Dhaka-Ashuganj and Dhaka-Brahmanbaria routes were also snapped yesterday as the highway has been damaged by flood waters at many points. To cope with the increasing rush of passengers, the Railway authorities added extra coaches to Dhaka-Chittagong and Dhaka-Sylhet trains, which also moved cautiously.

The Railway added a special train on the Dhaka-Chittagong route to cope with the surge of

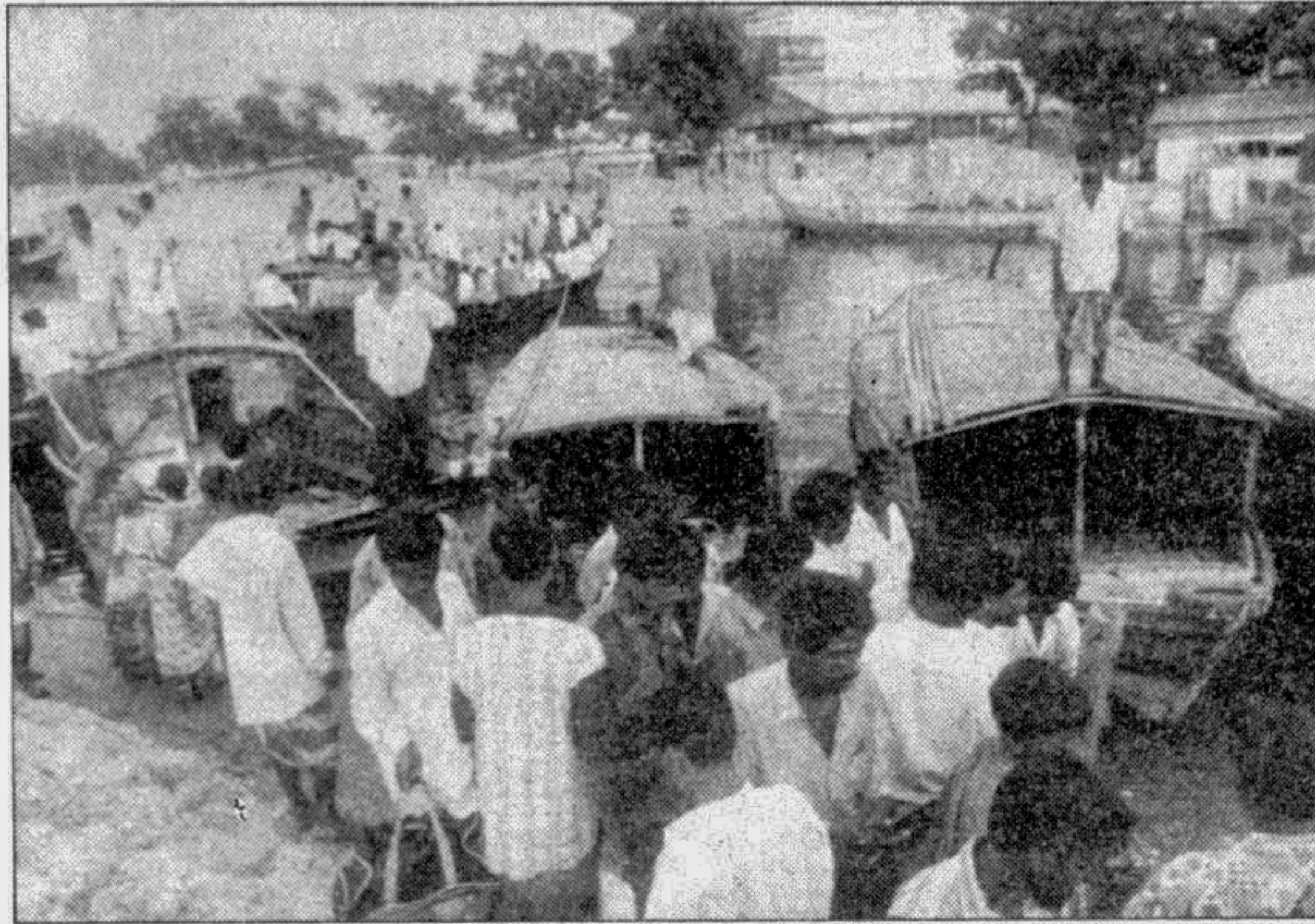
passengers following closure of the highways, declared off-limit also for cars and microbuses since Saturday.

Transport operators said the Dhaka-Aricha highway remained open yesterday although water was threatening it at five points.

The ferry terminal at Aricha is also under water. If the water level rises further today, the transport services will be stopped, Abdus Salam, an official of Sohag Transport said.

He said the company stopped taking reservation of seats yesterday in Chittagong after its last bus arrived in the city more than 20 hours late.

We checked the Dhaka-Chittagong road and found waist-deep water near Langolbandh bridge at 12:30 pm today, he said.



## Foreign aid sought for post-flood rehabilitation

The government will welcome all sorts of international assistance to deal with the gigantic task of post-flood rehabilitation in the country, reports UNB.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad said this yesterday while briefing the heads of diplomatic missions and international agencies in the city on the extent of damages wrought by the severe flood currently sweeping across the country.

He said: "We welcome any form of assistance, including rehabilitation, infrastructure development and dredging of rivers, from any government, international agencies, and development partners."

Briefing newsmen about the meeting, the foreign minister said many of the donor countries and agencies have already expressed concern over the flood situation in the country and enquired if the country needs any assistance.

Samad Azad said: "We will also welcome any assistance if any country or foreign agency

come forward voluntarily to supplementing the government's relief operation across the country."

Azad said one of the long term requirements of the country is the dredging of rivers which will help reduce flooding.

He said about 43 districts have been severely affected and the situation is worsening in about 15 districts, according to the latest report.

The foreign minister said as of Saturday 330 people have died due to flood related causes while thousands of people have been attacked by water-borne diseases. More than 6,642 draught cattle have perished.

The assessment of actual damage to crops and infrastructures in term of money would be possible only after the flood water records, he added. Preliminary assessment shows that crops have been damaged on 0.76 million hectares of agricultural land which is currently submerged. Of these, crops have been totally destroyed on about

See Page 12 Col 1

## Thirteen months after installation Kailashtila LPG plant yet to go for commercial production

From Iqbal Siddiquee

SYLHET, Aug 23: Commercial production of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) could not be started at the Kailashtila LPG Fractionation Plant at Gollapganj even after 13 months of its installation.

Authorities of the LPG producing plant, Rupantarita Prakritik Gas Company Limited (RPGCL), and the bottling plant, LP Gas Limited, are blaming each other for the failure.

Test operation of the plant was stopped on May 30 after a "change was marked in the quality of NGL" supplied through the pipeline of Sylhet Gas Fields Limited (SGFL) from its Kailashtila Gas Well No 2. It was learnt from sources in both the plants.

When contacted, a source in the RPGCL said, "We can start production any time. But the

problems are lying with the bottling plant, where some important machinery including the LPG pumps were found to be inoperative since those were installed." Besides, the LP Gas Company is yet to fix the price and select the dealers for the bottle LPG, the source said.

Asked whether the "Chromatograph", the machine used for making sample test was working, the RPGCL source admitted that it was not working but said, it was not affecting production in the plant.

When contacted, the Project Manager of LP Gas Limited, the bottling plant of LPG, declined to give any information about the plant. However, sources in the plant admitted that, the LPG pumps installed in the plant are "totally inoperative" and that the authorities had already asked its Chinese supplier — U

Huan Chemical Corporation — for immediate replacement. But, it will take more than two months to bring the pumps from Singapore to Sylhet, the source added. It is quite unlikely that operation will begin before late October.

The source also said that, the "Chromatograph" installed at the main plant is also a faulty one. For this reason, the quality of LPG produced in the plant cannot not be assured. RPGCL could not yet settle the matter of replacement of the "Chromatograph" with its Korean supplier, "Hunda", the source added.

Energy Secretary Dr Toufique Elahi Chowdhury visited both the plants on July 28 and talked to the authorities. He expressed his dissatisfaction over the situation and asked them to start commercial production. See Page 12 Col 3

## Father poisons starving son to death

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Aug 23: A father, unable to feed his family, poisoned his three-year-old son to death on Friday.

Following the incident, his wife committed suicide. Police said Jamir Sarder, 40, of Arashnagar village under Dumuria thana, forced his two sons, Abul and Kamrul, to take insecticide after he found them crying for food. They had been starving for the last two days, police added.

After a few minutes, Kamrul, the youngest of the two, died. Abul, the other son, is fighting for life in the Dumuria thana Health Complex.

After learning about the death of his son, Sarder's wife, Kulsom, 30, committed suicide taking the same insecticide. Police arrested Jamir Sarder while he tried to escape after having Abul admitted to the thana health complex.

A murder case has been lodged with Dumuria thana in this connection.

## Prel estimate of flood damages Tk 257cr will be needed to repair roads, railways

By Mizan Ali

The government will have to spend at least Tk 257 crore to repair the roads and railway tracks damaged by the floods, according to preliminary estimate prepared by the communications ministry.

Citing weather forecasts that the floods this year may drag up to mid-September, officials of the ministry feared the cost of repairing the roads and railway tracks might increase further with the worsening of the flood situation. The preliminary estimate was prepared by taking into account the damages caused by the flood till August 16.

Of the total amount, Tk 251.72 crore will be required for repairing the damaged roads while Tk 5.62 crore will be needed for the damaged railway tracks.

Meanwhile, the communications ministry has sought Tk 50 crore from the finance ministry for day to day repair of the

damaged roads, official sources said.

According to official estimate, 919 km roads including national and regional highways, 413 km road embankment, 460 km pavements, 102 bridges, 87 culverts and 12 ferry ghats have been damaged by the floods.

The estimate does not include the extensive damages caused by the rising flood waters to the Dhaka-Chittagong and Dhaka-Sylhet highways during the last two days. The Dhaka-Sylhet road link was snapped yesterday.

Bangladesh Railway has already suspended its operation in a 40 km railway track in the Jamalpur-Jagannathan ghat route. Flood-water has inundated railway tracks at several places on this route and trains are only operating upto Sarisabari since the morning of August 19, officials said.

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## Showcuse on 5 leaders

# BCL activists assault JU teacher on campus

By JU Correspondent

Activists of the ruling party-backed BCL assaulted a teacher of Jahangirnagar University on the campus yesterday.

The JU authorities later served showcase notices on five BCL leaders for assaulting the teacher.

The BCL leaders, including JU unit general secretary, Jasimuddin Manik, Vice President Hamidul Haq, former publicity secretary Meer Mehedi Hasan Titu, Bhasani Hall President Mahmudul Alam Babu and a leader of Kamaluddin Hall Hasibur Rahman Barkat, have been asked to reply to the notices within the next three days.

The BCL leaders led Jasimuddin Manik launched the attack on Rehnuma Ahmed, an assistant professor of the Anthropology Department, while she was taking photographs of a BCL rally near the JU administrative building at around 11:30 am, witnesses said.

Barrister Syed Ishtiaque Ahmed, Dr Kamal Hossain, Dr See Page 12 Col 5

BCL leaders hurled abuses at Rehnuma Ahmed who is also amateur photographer and a director of the reputed Drik Picture Library.

BCL organised the rally as part of its indefinite strike enforced at the university from today demanding investigation into three rape incidents that took place on the campus recently.

In a complaint lodged with the authorities, Rehnuma Ahmed alleged that she was roughly up by the BCL leaders while she was taking photographs of a rally in front of the administrative building.

Describing the assault as an attack on the entire teachers' community, she said "As a teacher, a woman and a citizen, I am disgraced and panicked. I am feeling totally insecure."

Rehnuma Ahmed in her written See Page 12 Col 4

## US attacks 'Sanctity of territorial integrity in question'

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad yesterday said the US missile attacks on Afghanistan and Sudan raise pertinent questions regarding the sanctity of territorial integrity of sovereign states, reports UNB.

Giving an official reaction to newsmen on Thursday's US attack, Samad Azad said Bangladesh has always opposed all forms of terrorism.

He said Bangladesh deplored the recent bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in the strongest terms.

"However, the US missile attacks on suspected terrorist sites in Afghanistan and Sudan cannot be condoned," Azad said. "This act also raises very pertinent questions on the sanctity of territorial integrity of sovereign states."

He said Bangladesh supports the coordinated efforts of the United Nations and other world bodies to combat the growing threat of terrorism.

## Rubel murder

### All 7 accused to be produced in court today

By Staff Correspondent

All seven accused in the Rubel murder case are scheduled to be produced in the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka today.

The date for producing the accused was fixed soon after the case was lodged with Ramna thana.

Abdur Rab, father of the victim, lodged the case with Ramna thana, accusing the seven BCL officials for the murder of his son. The case was lodged on July 24, the next day of the murder of Rubel.

Of the seven accused, six detained at the Dhaka Central Jail are: Inspector Aminul Islam, SI Hayatul Islam Thakur, ASI Abdul Karim, Havilder Nu-

See Page 12 Col 4

## Ivy Rahman says

### Interrogation of Mukuli may unearth mystery behind Rubel's killing

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Mahila Sangstha Chairman Ivy Rahman yesterday said the mystery behind Rubel's killing may be unveiled if the local Awami League leader and a neighbour of Rubel's family, Mukuli Begum, is interrogated properly.

In a statement yesterday, Ivy Rahman related reports published in a section of newspapers saying that Mukuli Begum accompanied her to Rubel's residence four days after the killing.

"The claim of Mukuli Begum that she went to Rubel's residence four days after the killing."

See Page 12 Col 4

## Hearing not held

### Chetia to engage two lawyers

By Staff Correspondent

Anup Chetia, leader of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) and two of his associates yesterday signed Vakalatnama in the court of the Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate to engage their own defence lawyers.

They signed Vakalatnama for advocates Sigma Huda and Alina Khan to assist the lawyers of the state defence appointed for them.

Hearing was not held in the court yesterday as the prosecution witness could not appear. The next date of hearing has been fixed on September 3.

Chetia and his two associates were produced in the court yesterday for hearing of two cases filed under Section 11 (b) of the Passport Act and Section 14 of Foreigners Act. They are facing charges for illegal possession of Bangladeshi passports and unauthorised stay in the country.

Chetia was allowed to sit on a chair on the dock when he complained of illness during the proceedings of the case.

## HC rule on SEC, enquiry body members

A division bench of the High Court yesterday issued rule upon the Securities Exchange Commission (SEC) and members of its enquiry committee to show cause as to why they should not be directed to enquire, investigate and take prompt action against the companies responsible for the crash of the stock market in 1996, reports UNB.

The bench comprising Justice AM Mahmudur Rahman See Page 12 Col 8