

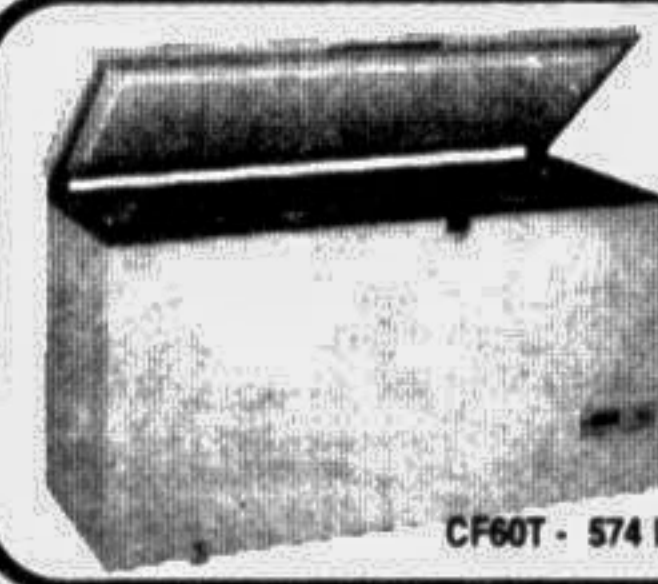
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Down to Earth

Terrible trouble to city systems

By A S M Nurunnabi

In the city's post-flood situation, polythene bags have emerged as alarming objects on account of their sinister role in clogging the drainage and sewerage systems of the city. Even before the flood, their damaging effects were long in evidence. In January, 1994, the government issued orders banning the production of polythene bags. But these orders were not implemented because of a contrary trend of opinion. And under pressure from the vested quarters, the processes of manufacturing, sale and use of polythene bags are going on unabated.

Now, in view of their devastating effects from their ubiquitous use, there seems to be no scope for dithering on the issue of polythene bags. It was reported that in a recent inter-ministerial meeting, the minister for environment and forests said that serious efforts are under way for the gradual phasing out of polythene bags.

In this context, we have come across some disconcerting information. It has been reported that about 60 lakh polythene bags are now used in the Dhaka city. Previously the total quantity was said to be 52 lakhs. On account of the flood, 8 lakh more only bags were in use. A large part of these discarded poly bags could be seen floating during the flood in the city. The pace of recession of flood water from many city areas has been largely affected by the clogging of the mouths of outlets in the city's drainage

and drainage systems. Since the polythene materials are not biodegradable or, in other words, since they do not decompose through natural process, whenever a polythene bag is thrown away, it contributes to the accumulation of indestructible, wastes of permanent nature. If anybody cares to look at the garbage dumps at Sydbad or Kalyanpur, it will be seen that although other garbage matters get decomposed and merged into the soil, the discarded polythene bags of many colours stand out bravely. Here lies a serious environmental threat, affecting not only the drainage and sewerage systems but also the fertility of the soil as they sink deep into its fold.

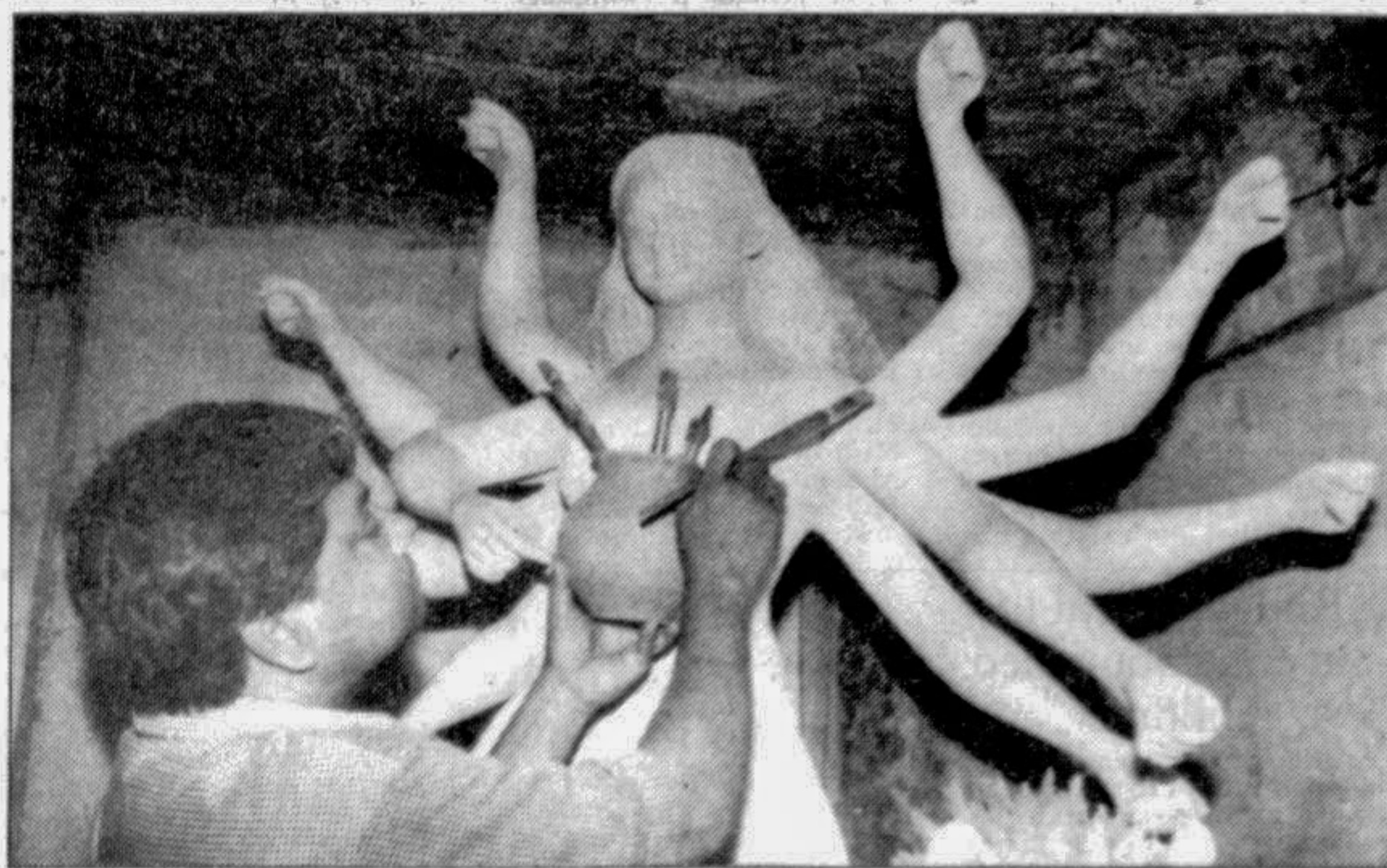
With the growing use of polythene bags, such a fear becomes all the more ominous. Out of the present estimated use of 60 lakh polybags daily in the city, only 20% may be amenable to recycling. But recycling is not a permanent answer because even in a highly disciplined and orderly society, such recycling can never be achieved cent per cent. The residue from the appalling quantity adds up over the years to a serious environmental problem.

Some may argue in favour of polythene bags by saying that the polybag industry is a thriving one and has generated employment opportunities for many. Such argument is hardly tenable because this has severely affected the jute bag

manufacturers who need be rehabilitated through abolition of the environmentally hostile polythene bags. It is widely felt that with an extended research and development programme, polythene can be made to play a more environment-friendly part by replacing wood in furniture-making, etc.

It has been lately reported that in the Sabujbagh-Motihel area of the city, a social movement has been mounted against polythene bags under which incentive has been provided for clearance of used polybags by way of offer of each money or rice/when in line of specific quantities of surrendered collection of used polybags. It will be good sign if such kind of social movement gets currency in other areas of the city. It needs hardly be overemphasised that arousing of social consciousness against the evil effects of polybags may play a significant part in safeguarding society from environmental perils associated with the use of polybags.

It is, therefore, felt that the 1994 orders should be enforced and import of raw materials for polythene bag manufacturing should be severely restricted. It is felt by some observers that our failure in this respect may be regarded as a national scandal if we give way to the tendency of some important people to avert their eyes from the polythene curse as if it is nothing.



An image of goddess Durga being given final touches at a city temple yesterday. Durga Puja of the Hindu community begins tomorrow.

Move to sack Bihar govt Opposition stages protests: 400 held

NEW DELHI, Sept 25: Indian opposition parties staged a nationwide day of action today as the country waited to see if President K R Narayanan would approve a cabinet decision to sack a state government, reports AFP.

Protests and rallies were held to denounce Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and his cabinet for recommending the imposition of direct federal rule on the eastern state of Bihar.

Durga Puja begins tomorrow

Durga Puja, the biggest religious festival of the Hindu community, will begin tomorrow, reports UNB.

Mahanagar Sarbojanin Puja Committee has drawn up a five-day programme to celebrate the festival.

13 JU students

From Page 1
from them," another Syndicate told The Daily Star, requesting anonymity.

The syndicate is also considering whether it should draw criminal proceedings against the 13 students, he said.

Dhaka seeks coop for holding NAM summit in 2001

Bangladesh sought the cooperation and support of the member countries of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) for holding the next summit scheduled for 2001 in Dhaka, reports BSS.

Making a statement at the NAM Foreign Minister's meeting at the UN General Assembly in New York Thursday, Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad said Bangladesh is determined to make the summit a success.

Due to the decision, Bangladesh has become a member of the troika of NAM.

Azad said NAM could play Gas pipeline

From Page 1
unauthorised extension line" as the cause of the incident at West Jurain.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, the officials insisted that "unauthorised extension lines" were causing most of the accidents.

"It is difficult for us to detect the illegal connections by scanning the residence of every consumer of Titas," an official said when asked about measures against the "unauthorised extension lines".

As many as 1500 leaks were detected in the distribution pipelines of Titas Gas in different areas of the country, particularly in the flood affected areas, officials said.

Twelve teams, each comprising one official and three staff, have already started repairing the leaks in the city, they claimed.

Outside the city, its regional offices in areas like Munshiganj, Narayanganj, Tongi, Brahmanbaria and Savar have been alerted to repair the leaks, they noted. The repair work will be completed by October 31, they said.

"We have been facing difficulties as gas distribution pipelines in different areas are still under flood water" — a top official of Titas Gas replied when asked why it should take such a long time to repair the leaks.

Euro to emerge

From Page 1
in Euro with the launching of European single currency. The Bangladesh Bank is also expected to open a Euro account for purposes of exchange and accounting with members of the EMU countries.

Bangladesh would be the single largest economic trading partner with EMU with around 40 per cent of export earnings from the EU countries.

Bangladesh is likely to make foreign currency payments and settlements with the launching of the EMU. It may also maintain a Euro reserve as it maintains a dollar reserve.

Introduction of the new international currency is being welcomed by Multi-National Companies (MNCs) as they said, it would make cost calculations and global transactions far easier.

Patrick Child explained that the Euro will bring an end to the exchange rate fluctuations between the participating member states. Low inflation and interest rates and more predictable growth will reduce the uncertainties that hamper investment decisions. Also by eliminating the exchange risk, the Euro will make firms in EMU countries more competitive and give them the springboard from which they could fight and withstand global competition.

Prof Eddy De Smitjer of the University of Leuven in Belgium said, "The Euro would make its mark on the international scene. It will become one of the world's significant transaction, investment and reserve currencies."

The Euro may as well emerge as the leading currency of the 21st century.

Spanish airliner

From Page 1
stationed in the enclave, according to national radio.

"It appears the plane crashed into a hilltop and broke into pieces," said Mellilla regional government chief, Enrique Palacios.

The 86-seat plane, a British-built BAE 146, belonged to a Spanish charter airline called Pauknair.

Waste disposal

From Page 1
Autoclaves are the most commonly used alternatives in the developing nations. Like most of the waste disinfecting techniques, an autoclave destroys infectious agents through the use of steam heat, like a high technology dishwasher.

"Unlike incineration, material is not burned in this process, thus reducing the risk of dioxin production. Frequently, waste is shredded prior to autoclaving, in order to facilitate the process," an expert said.

Microwaves use radiant energy to boil water that is sprayed onto waste. Once the water reaches boiling point, it boils the microbes, rendering most of them harmless.

Microwaves, autoclaves and other alternative waste treatment technologies must be independently evaluated for safety and effectiveness, the expert noted.

Dr Samir Saha, a microbiologist, said, "When typhoid bacteria grow in laboratory from blood or stool specimen, a single bacteria multiplies to billions. If the cultures are discarded without killing the microbes, which occurs in most cases, it can infect another hundred persons. In fact most of our hospitals are disposing clinical waste without any treatment."

He added, "Apart from typhoid, cholera and dysentery, micro-organisms and hepatitis A and E virus are also spread in the same manner."

Dhaka-Sylhet flight of Biman delayed for five hours

A Biman flight from Dhaka to Sylhet was delayed for over five hours following a quarrel between the operating captain and the ground engineer, reports UNB.

The Dhaka-Sylhet flight, BG 601, was scheduled to take off from Zia International Airport (ZIA) at 8:45 am with operating Captain Arbinda.

The on-duty ground engineer refused to work with Capt Arbinda due to previous quarrel that had also delayed another Dhaka-Sylhet flight on Monday last.

The flight BG 601 finally left the airport at 1 pm with ATP, Captain Siddique operated the flight.

A Biman official said a one-member committee was constituted with the DG (Admin) to inquire into both incidents. The committee was asked to submit its report within a week.

20 JU students

From Page 1
Politics, Atiqur Rahman Naim of History and Anisur Rahman of the department of English.

The six are also influential leaders of the BCL at the university.

The report found that top leaders and armed cadres of a particular political party and some outsiders were involved in the incidence of rape. The outsiders were Sohail, Mukul and Raj.

The abettors in the incidents were identified as Titu, Ferdous, Rafiq, Ruhul, Sohag and Kajol. They were also students of the JU and leaders of BCL.

Token strike Oct 1

As part of its greater movement, the meeting unanimously resolved to observe a four-hour token strike from 10 am to 2 pm on October 1 (one) in all newspaper and news agency offices to press home the demand for implementation of the Wage Board Award in all new organisations where it has not yet been materialised.

A protest rally of the journalists will also be held at 11 am at the National Press Club on the same day in support of the movement.

The meeting called upon the Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) to announce countrywide programmes for the implementation of the Wage Board Award.

BFUJ president Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury and Secretary General Abul Kalam Azad attended the meeting as special guests while journalists leader Shaheer Rahman, Azizul Islam Bhuiyan, Akhter Ahmed Khan, Abdur Rahman, Shah Alamgir, Quazi Maqsoodul Hasan, Ataur Rahman, Abdur Mannan and Mostaq Mobaraki spoke on the occasion.

The Fact Finding Committee scrutinised more than 350 'secret' letters and interviewed 18 alleged offenders and about 30 witnesses including students and others. The committee also visited the alleged sites of the incidents, the report noted.

The seven-member Fact Finding Committee headed by Prof Anwarul Haq Sharif, comprises Dr A Mannan Chowdhury, Proctor of the university; Prof Abul Hussain, Provost of Al Beruni Hall; Kanchan Chowdhury, Provost of Priti-lata Hall; Prof Nasim Akhter Hussain, Provost of Nawab Faizunnessa Hall; A N Rasheda, Syndicate member and Prof Sauda Akhter a teacher of Bangla Department of the university.

Road accidents kill 8 in Bandarban, Pabna

By Staff Correspondent

At least eight people were killed and five others injured in road accidents, in Bandarban and Pabna yesterday.

Of them, five were killed in Bandarban and three in Pabna. In Bandarban, five people were killed and five others injured when a passenger bus collided with a tempo at Haludia on Bandarban-Keranihat road yesterday.

The killed were identified as Golam Quader 50, Animong Marna 25, Sphansu 55, Jakoria 45, and Abdul Karim, 18.

UNB quoting witnesses and police said the Bandarban-bound bus hit the Keranihat-bound tempo at about 4 pm killing all five passengers of the tempo on the spot.

Of the injured A R Long Murong 25, was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital while another four — Anwara Begum 40, Hafez Hamid 40, Nurul Afsar 20, and Crow Crue 25 — were admitted to Bandarban sadar hospital.

The condition of the injured persons were stated to be critical.

The bodies were sent to Bandarban sadar hospital for autopsy. Police seized the bus. Both the drivers managed to flee the scene.

A case was filed in this connection.

Our Pabna Correspondent writes: Three people were killed

gheraoed ministers in several districts protesting plundering and improper distribution of relief.

Many people still remained marooned, but the government could not arrange to shift them to flood shelters, she said.

She reiterated her demand for immediately starting rehabilitation and reconstruction work, creating mass employment, and giving interest-free loan and supplying agri-inputs to the farmers free of cost.

The Opposition Leader warned that if her demand is not met and the relief operation is not run properly, an anti-government movement will be launched.

Criticising the deployment of army in traffic control, she asked the government to immediately withdraw the army personnel from traffic duty.

The government has engaged army in this job in a bid to destroy the institution and undermine its glorious image, she alleged.

Referring to a statement of some intellectuals that there is no need of army in the country, the BNP Chairperson said the government is planning to reduce the army gradually.

Recalling the performance of army in protecting the flood control embankments along with people, she said the army have proved their efficiency in tackling the natural calamity.

when a speeding truck hit a motorbike near Calico Cotton Mills at Rajapur on Pabna-Nagarbari road yesterday.

Police said the Sirajganj-bound truck collided with a motorbike coming from opposite direction at about 10:30 am, killing three passengers of the bike on the spot.

The dead were identified as Sirajul Islam, 22, Mithu, 25 and Don, 15.

Police seized the truck, but its driver managed to flee the scene.

A case was filed with Pabna sadar thana in this connection.

14-year-old girl allegedly raped in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent
SYLHET, Sept 25: A forest officer who was arrested yesterday on charge of violating a 14-year old girl has been sent to jail today this afternoon.

Gowainghat police said, the victim's father, a guard of the Forest Department, lodged a case yesterday afternoon. Police said Alamgir, the officer, had raped the girl at midnight on Wednesday when the victim's father alongwith his wife, went out of their house adjacent to the officer's lodge.

The victim and her father are now in the police custody at the Gowainghat thana. Medical test of the victim would be done on Sunday, police said.

BCL-JCD clash at Sirajganj: 10 injured

SIRAJGANJ, Sept 25: Ten persons were injured in a clash between the activists of Chhatra League and Jatiyatbadi Chhatra Dal in the town today, reports APB.

Police said the clash between the two student organisations erupted at about 5 pm following the attack on AL worker, Akbar Ali, 30, by his opponents Thursday night.

Several shops were also ransacked during the clash.

Police resorted to lath-charge to bring the situation under control.

Wanted criminal

From Page 1
League chief Sheikh Hasina's meeting at Laldighi in 1993.

Police today raided a house at Zakir Hossain Road at about 11:30 am and caught him. Police said Mamun was involved in extortion and leading his armed cadres in various offences in the port city.

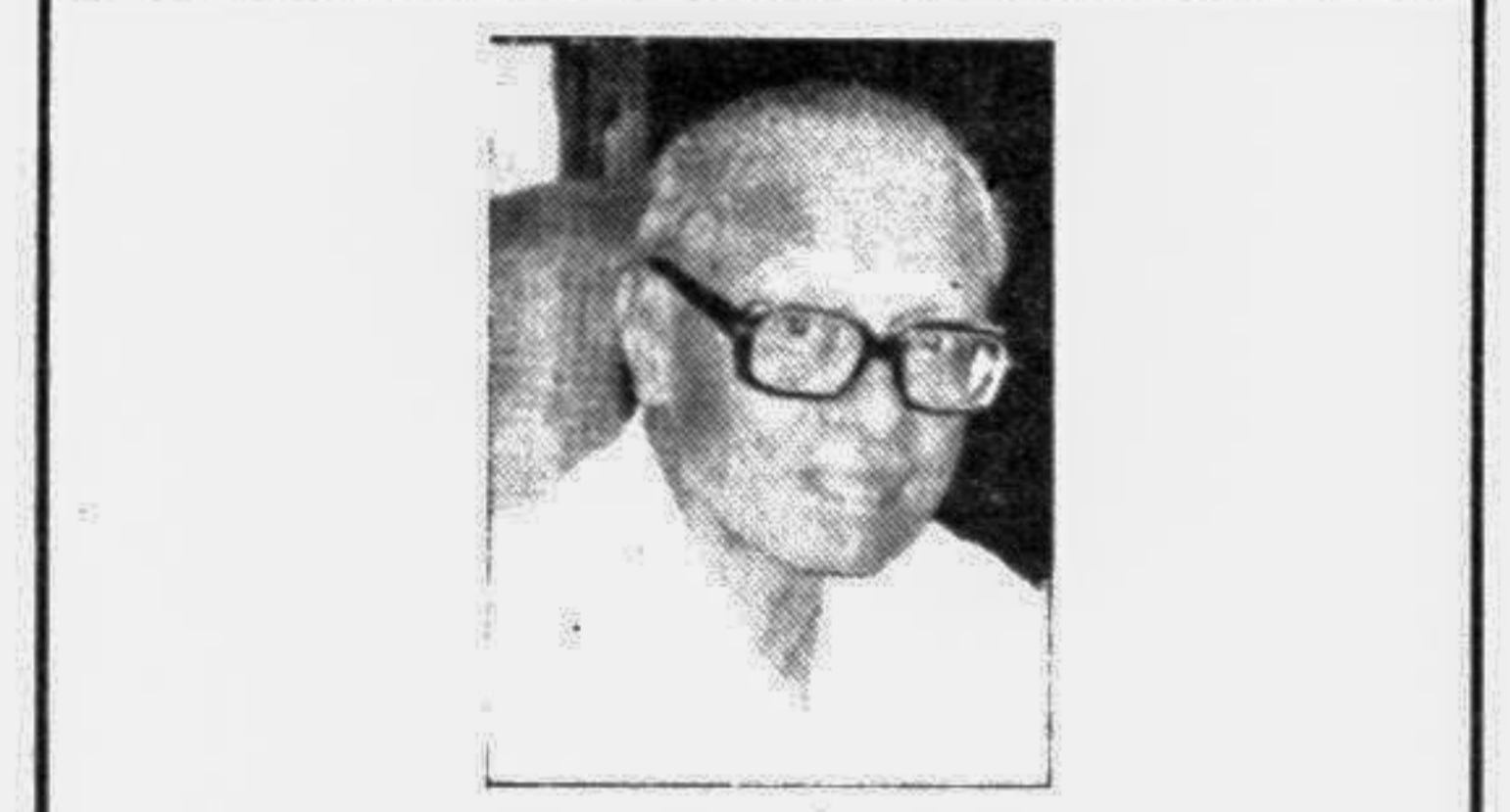
Mamun was sent to Chittagong jail immediately after his arrest.

Turag flows

From Page 1
Room yesterday reported 28 diarrhoeal deaths in 24 hours until Friday morning while 15,798 others were affected during the same period.

Normal transport movement on Dhaka-Aricha Highway has been restored with the completion of its first phase repair work, an official press release said.

Earlier, Dhaka-Mawa Highway was reopened to traffic re-establishing direct road link between the capital and the southwestern part of the country, Thursday.



Prof. Mofizuddin Ahmed 1923-1997

Today, Saturday, 26th September 1998, is the First Death Anniversary of Professor Mofizuddin Ahmed, (Professor Emeritus, Dept. of Chemistry, Dhaka University; first Vice Chancellor, Jahangirnagar University, etc.).

His former students, colleagues, friends and relatives, are kindly requested to remember him in their prayers.

D-499

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