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Bill seeking compulsory use of Bangla rejected

Staff Correspondent
A bill seeking compulsory use of Bangla in all official correspondence was rejected by voice vote in parliament yesterday.

Proposed by Jatiya Party member Dr. Rustam Ali Farazi, the bill also sought delivery of court verdicts in Bangla.

Defending his position, the JP legislator said, the poor people who do not know English find it very difficult to understand a government order or a judgement of a court when the order and the judgement are delivered in the foreign language. "On top of all, they frequently

Bill on police interrogation placed in JS

By Staff Correspondent
A bill seeking to prevent police from harassing people in the name of interrogation was introduced in parliament by an Opposition member yesterday, a private member's day.

The bill is titled Criminal Procedure Court (Consolidation of Power) Act, 1998. It includes the following provisions:

(a) The Court concerned would determine the place of interrogation, while permitting the police take a detained on remand person for interrogation.

(b) The court will permit police to interrogate a detained person only in presence of a representative chosen by the accused. If there is no representative of the detained person, the court will appoint a lawyer and police would interrogate him in front of the lawyer.

(c) The police will have to interrogate the detained person in the day time, while the period of interrogation would not be more than eight hours a day.

Introduced by BNP member Abdul Mannan, the proposed legislation was sent to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Private Members Bill for scrutiny.

Deep depression over Bay

The deep depression over southeast Bay and adjoining area moved northwards into east central Bay and adjoining southeast Bay, a Met office special bulletin said in Dhaka last night, reports BSS.

It was centered at 9.00 pm last night about 1030 km southwest of Chittagong Port, 960km south-southwest of Cox's Bazar and 1090 km south-southeast of Khulna town.

It is likely to intensify further and move in a northwesterly direction.

UZ Parishad Bill finalised with some amendments

A meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on LGRD and Cooperatives Ministry yesterday finalised the report on the UZ Parishad Bill, 1998 with some amendments, reports UNB.

The Bill was earlier tabled in the House and sent to the Standing Committee for scrutiny.

Committee president Abdul Mannan presided over the meeting at the Sangsad Bhaban.

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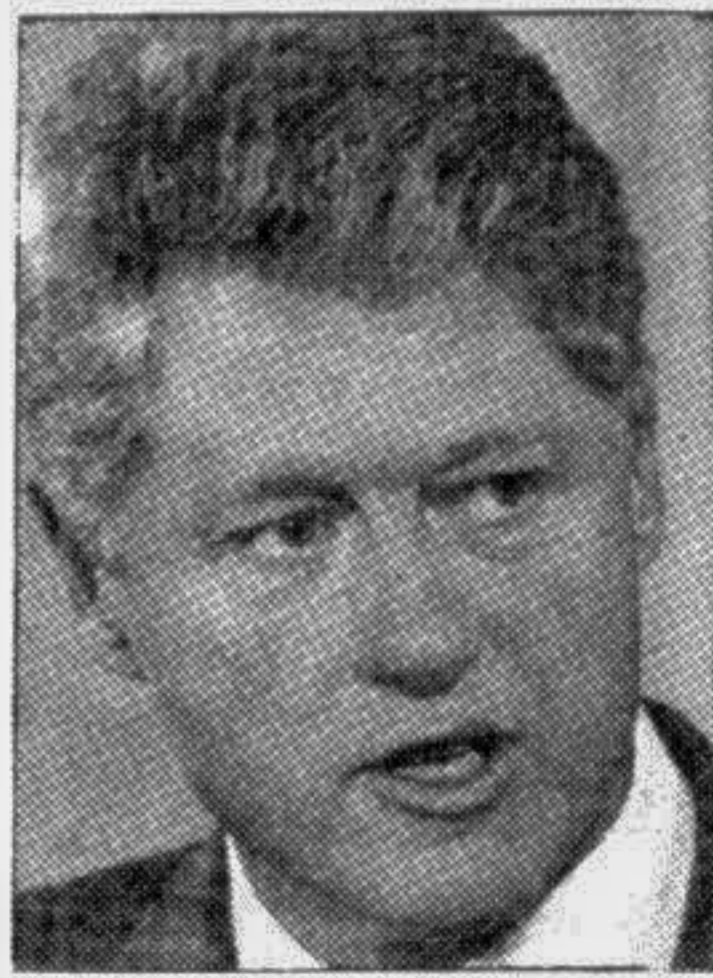
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Starr kicks off third impeachment inquiry in US history

'Clinton misused authority, power'



Bill Clinton

WASHINGTON, Nov 19: Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr opened the third presidential impeachment inquiry in US history by charging that President Bill Clinton 'misused his authority and power' to impede civil and criminal cases against him, reports AP.

"The hearing today is not a trial. It is not White House versus Starr. Nor is it Republican versus Democrat," House Judiciary Committee Chairman Henry Hyde exhorted his colleagues today.

In a tense start, Republicans immediately thwarted a Democratic request to give the president's lawyer more time to cross-examine Starr as the prosecutor looked on politely for the opportunity to make his case. "This is a grave disservice at a grave constitutional moment," Rep William Delahunt said.

"On at least six different occasions — from Dec 17, 1997,

through Aug 17, 1998 — the president had to make a decision," Starr said in his prepared testimony. "He could choose truth or he could choose deception. On all six occasions, the president choose deception."

Starr was the leadoff witness for the historic event, with nine television networks carrying the hearing live. It promised to provide a highly partisan start to proceedings aimed at deciding whether Clinton should be removed from office by subsequent votes in the full House and Senate.

The hearing was in the same room where the last impeachment proceedings against President Richard Nixon convened a quarter century ago.

Seeking to end this threat to Clinton's presidency and prevent a permanent blot on his legacy, the White House sent Clinton's private lawyer, David Kendall, to interrogate

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Monica Lewinsky



Six of the 23 chargesheeted accused in the Jail Killing Case being taken to court yesterday. From left to right, Nurul Islam Manjur, Shah Moazzem Hossain, Taheruddin Thakur, KM Obaidur Rahman, Maj (ret'd) Khairuzzaman and Lt Col (relieved) Sharier Rashid Khan.

8 out of 21 chargesheeted accused produced in court Documents of Jail Killing Case sent to Sessions Judge's Court

By Staff Correspondent

The court of Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka yesterday sent the document of the jail killing case to the court of Sessions Judge, Dhaka for its trial.

During yesterday's proceedings of the court, eight of the 21 chargesheeted accused in the jail killing case were produced in the court court, housed at the Nazimuddin Road building in front of Dhaka Central Jail, where the trial of Bangabandhu Murder Case was held.

The accused were produced in the court yesterday, as per the date fixed earlier for their appearance. The eight accused were brought to the court at around 11:10 am and the pro-

ceedings were held for about 10 minutes.

The Additional CMM Habibur Rahman sent the document of the case to the sessions court saying that the case is now ready for trial. But the date of trial was yet to be fixed.

Taheruddin Thakur, an accused of the case and a former minister of state in the cabinet of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as well as that of Khandaker Mushtaque Ahmed, yesterday retracted his judicial statement which was earlier recorded under section 164 of Code of Criminal Procedure.

The court observed that Thakur should retract his statement through the proper

channel.

Of the eight accused in the case - Shah Moazzem Hossain, KM Obaidur Rahman and Nurul Islam Manjur were brought to the court in a white colour microbus.

The five others - Lt Col (dismissed) Syed Ferooqur Rahman, Lt Col (relieved) Sultan Sahrieh Rashid Khan, Major (ret'd) Bazul Huda, Taheruddin Thakur, and Major (ret'd) Khairuzzaman were brought to the court premises in a prison van.

Among the eight, Ferooq, Sahrieh and Huda have already been convicted to death by firing squad in public in the Bangabandhu murder case the

verdict of which was announced on November 8.

The case in connection with the jail killing was lodged with the Lalbagh thana following the killing of four national leaders - Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, Mansur Ali and AHM Kamruzzaman -- inside the Dhaka Central Jail on November 3, 1975.

Investigation of the case began in September 1996, following the return of Awami League

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Gas becomes 15pc costlier from Dec 1

The government has raised the price of gas by 15 per cent for all categories of consumers with effect from December 1, reports UNB.

Domestic consumers will have to pay Tk 184 for a single burner and Tk 287.50 for double burner, as against existing rate of Tk 160 and Tk 250.

Per thousand cubic feet gas will cost Tk 62.10, instead of Tk 54. The gas price was last raised on March 1, 1994.

Justifying the price hike, an official handout last night said the price of gas is still much lower compared to international price and alternative fuel.

The previous government, at the time of taking World Bank loan for gas infrastructure project, had pledged for raising the gas price by five per cent annually from 1995-96 fiscal year. The government had also

pledged for raising the price to the extent of international oil price to the Asian Development Bank at the time of taking its loan.

Besides, the government is buying gas at a price closely to the international rate from the multinational oil companies CAIRN and OXY who have started exploiting and supplying gas.

The government wanted for quite some time before raising the tariff considering hardships of people caused by the devastating floods, the handout said.

The international financing agencies had asked for implementation of commitments of raising the gas price when fresh funds were sought for post-flood rehabilitation. IMF had also pressed for implementing the government pledge, explained the official handout.

Dialogue on hartal 12 BNP preconditions

BNP has set 12 preconditions for sitting with the government to talk whether they would also shun hartal, reports UNB.

"Verbal commitment is not enough. Fulfill the demands that are the main reasons for hartal," BNP Vice-Chairman and Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Prof. AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury asked the government.

Speaking at a discussion in the city yesterday on the occasion of 22nd death anniversary of Maulana Bhasani, he said BNP would also have to sit with its political allies prior to discussing the matter if the government conceded to the conditions.

The conditions are:
Holding of mid-term elec-

tions immediately
Practical steps to ensure free and fair polls in all spheres
End to politicisation and nepotism. Power-sharing with the opposition with regard to taking all decisions
Realising the two agreements signed in parliament
Providing the opposition with equal facilities to speak in parliament
Rescinding CHT Accord and taking decision on the issue on the basis of referendum
Halt to repression on political activists
Compensation to the repressed political activists
Withdrawal of all political cases filed against the opposition leaders and workers
Ensuring trial against the ruling party activists who are

accused in criminal cases
Holding true trial of all women-repression cases
Stopping propaganda against the opposition leaders
Chowdhury told the meeting that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was now spitting at hartal after inflicting losses of crores of taka by enforcing "illogical" shutdown for 173 days when BNP was in power.

"According to the present Finance Minister, a day's hartal causes a loss of Tk 386 crore. If Tk 86 crore is deducted, even then Awami League had caused a colossal loss of Tk 51,900 crore by their 173 days of hartal," he said.

He charged the government with downgrading Awami League's founder, Maulana Ab-

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JS enjoys a woman in the Chair

By Nazmul Ashraf
It was a different day for members of the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday when they found a woman in the Speaker's chair, a rare instance of its kind in the country's parliamentary history.

Members of both the Benches cheered up finding Rabeya Bhuiyan, a Jatiya Party lawmaker, presiding over yesterday's sitting of the Parliament. As a Panel member, she ran the show for about 20 minutes.

All the members present during the start of the JS sitting at 5:05 pm, burst into laughter and started thumping their desks as soon as Rabeya entered the House.

HM Ershad, the JP Chairman, rejoiced more than anybody else did. While others

See Page 12 Col 3

TUs may be banned at BB, restricted at NCBs

By Inam Ahmed and M Shamsur Rahman
The government is likely to ban trade unions (TU) in the central bank and restrict their activities in the Nationalised Commercial Banks (NCBs) in the wake of widespread allegations of corruption against them.

The eight-member Council Committee for Finance and Economic Affairs headed by Finance Minister Shah AMŠ Kibria has decided in principle to ban TUs in the Bangladesh Bank. However, on the question of banning them in the NCBs, the committee is still undecided, according to sources.

The committee, however, is firm on the point that TU activities should be banned in the district and divisional branches of the NCBs.

It feels that TUs in NCBs should only exist in the headquarters, as the law stipulates,

and not in any other branch of office.

The banks will not take into cognisance the branch TUs for any purpose, the committee said.

The committee decisions are likely to be placed before the Cabinet for approval soon, sources said.

On the issue of banning TUs in NCBs, some ministers are a bit hesitant, the sources added. They fear that such a ban could trigger massive protest and result in losing votes in the next election.

Early this year, the government banned trade union in the BB following an incident in which some employees, reportedly enjoying the blessings of the ruling party, threatened a senior official of the with death. Later, a clash between

DSE controversy may land in court

By M Shamsur Rahman
An angry DSE councillor, unhappy with the decisions of the bourse election committee and appellate body, is planning to go to court.

The appellate board yesterday gave its verdict upholding the election committee decision on four retiring councillors and retention of M Rakibur Rahman.

"After retirement ... a councillor cannot be considered as a valid councillor," the appeal committee said.

Kazi Feroz Rashid, Ahsanul Islam Tito, Dewan Suhel Afzal and Chairman Rakibur Rahman were declared to have retired by the election committee through a lottery after none had volunteered to step down.

According to election rules, four councillors of DSE are to retire every year. Being the first

See Page 12 Col 7

Rajuk doing it again

By Morshed Ali Khan
Rajuk is again filling up a big chunk of Gulshan Lake, claiming they are building roads and green areas along the lake "to protect it from further encroachment".

An on-the-spot visit reveals that under the "project", Rajuk is filling up about 60 feet of the lake at the end of Road 123 stretching an area of more than 1,500 feet.

Scores of trucks were seen arriving at the site and dumping earth into the lake. Those overseeing the operation said they were doing a Tk 60 lakh earth filling work for Rajuk.

Mohammad Noor Hossain of the contracting firm said they would fill 60 feet of the lake as per the contract and that, as he understood, it would act as an embankment to prevent flooding. "I was told that the Education Minister's house was flooded when the level of lake water rose during the recent flood; so the embankment is required," Noor Hossain said

pointing his finger at a nearby house guarded by armed policemen.

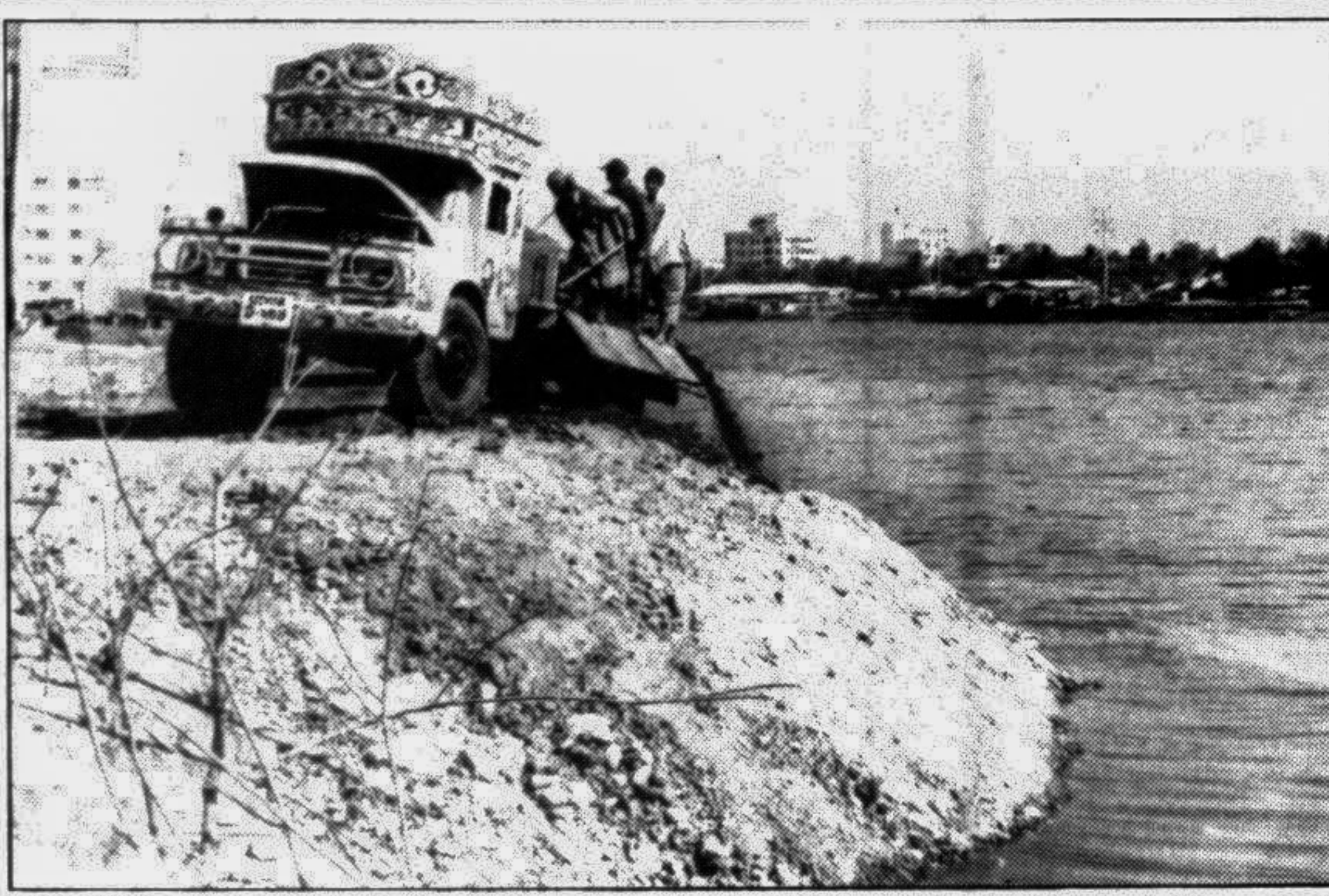
A resident of the area requesting anonymity alleged that the filling of the lake was another Rajuk move to destroy the environment of the area.

"I have been living here for 30 years and I have seen this kind of lake filling by Rajuk at least half a dozen times. Every time they fill up huge lake areas telling us that it is being done for constructing a walkway and a green area for the residents. In fact, they allocated plots to individuals," he said.

When contacted, Rajuk Chairman M Azizul Haque admitted filling up "some parts of the lake". He said Rajuk has taken up a "project" to build a road and green areas with walkways all along the Gulshan lake to duly demarcate the lake area and protect it from further encroachment.

When reminded that the

See Page 12 Col 1



RAPE OF THE LAKE: Earths being dumped into Gulshan Lake by Rajuk at the end of Road-123 yesterday.

ANNOUNCEMENT

A public dialogue on "Women and Security", organised by The Daily Star and Centre for Alternatives will be held at IBA auditorium (behind Madhu's Canteen) Dhaka University on Saturday, 21 November, 1998 from 9:30 am-5:00 pm. Leading women activists, academicians, jurists, feminists, writers and many more will participate in the discussion.

ALL ARE INVITED TO ATTEND