

Govt has placed special emphasis on 'economic diplomacy': Azad

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad yesterday said the government has placed special emphasis on 'Economic Diplomacy' with the objectives of promoting exports, attracting foreign investment and securing more employment opportunities for country's people in labour-importing countries, reports UNB.

He was speaking at the passing out ceremony of the trainee officers of the BCS (Foreign Affairs) cadre at the Foreign Service Academy in the city yesterday.

The minister said the realisation of these goals would depend on the combined efforts of political leadership and diplomats.

He said the diplomats are entrusted with the responsibility of attaining these objectives in accordance with the guidelines formulated by the government. "Their task is, no doubt, of highly specialised and challenging nature."

Samad Azad said the gov-

ernment is continuing its endeavours for enhancing country's image abroad, securing a place of honour for her in the comity of nations, contributing to the cause of peace and security in the world and achieving socio-economic well-being and prosperity of people.

Bangladesh could not remain indifferent to the new and emerging issues affecting the humankind as well as the ongoing process of globalisation and liberalisation resulting in profound and unprecedented transformation all over the world, the Foreign Minister added.

Against this backdrop, he said Bangladesh needs to be more vigilant and active in order to cope with the challenges of today and tomorrow.

Terminology of the mechanism for the conduct of inter-state relations through friendly interactions and peaceful means, the Foreign Minister said, it is the tool for implementation of the foreign policy objectives of independent

and sovereign states.

"So there is an imperative need for the diplomats to have both theoretical and practical training," he said.

He emphasised on specialised training at the academy and on-the-job training at home and abroad for performing their functions efficiently and effectively which would broaden their mental horizon.

Samad Azad hoped the young officers would inculcate in themselves the qualities of commitment, diligence, discipline, discretion, efficiency, honesty, motivation, patriotism, professionalism, self-respect and tact for effective performance of the duties and responsibilities entrusted on them.

Thirteen officers participated in the 6-month course. The function was addressed, among others, by State Minister of Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury and Foreign Secretary Mostafizur Rahman.

Code of conduct in educational instts stressed

By DU Correspondent

Speakers at an open discussion yesterday emphasised the need for introducing a 'code of conduct' in the educational institutions and working places to check sexual harassment of women.

They said a 'permanent cell' should also be set up so that the victims could lodge complaints easily and fearlessly.

The Women for Women (WFW) and Naripakkha jointly organised the discussion on "Prevention of Sexual Harassment in Educational Institutions", held at the Shishu Academy in the city.

WFW president Salma Khan conducted the programme which was largely attended by eminent citizens, university teachers, students and professionals.

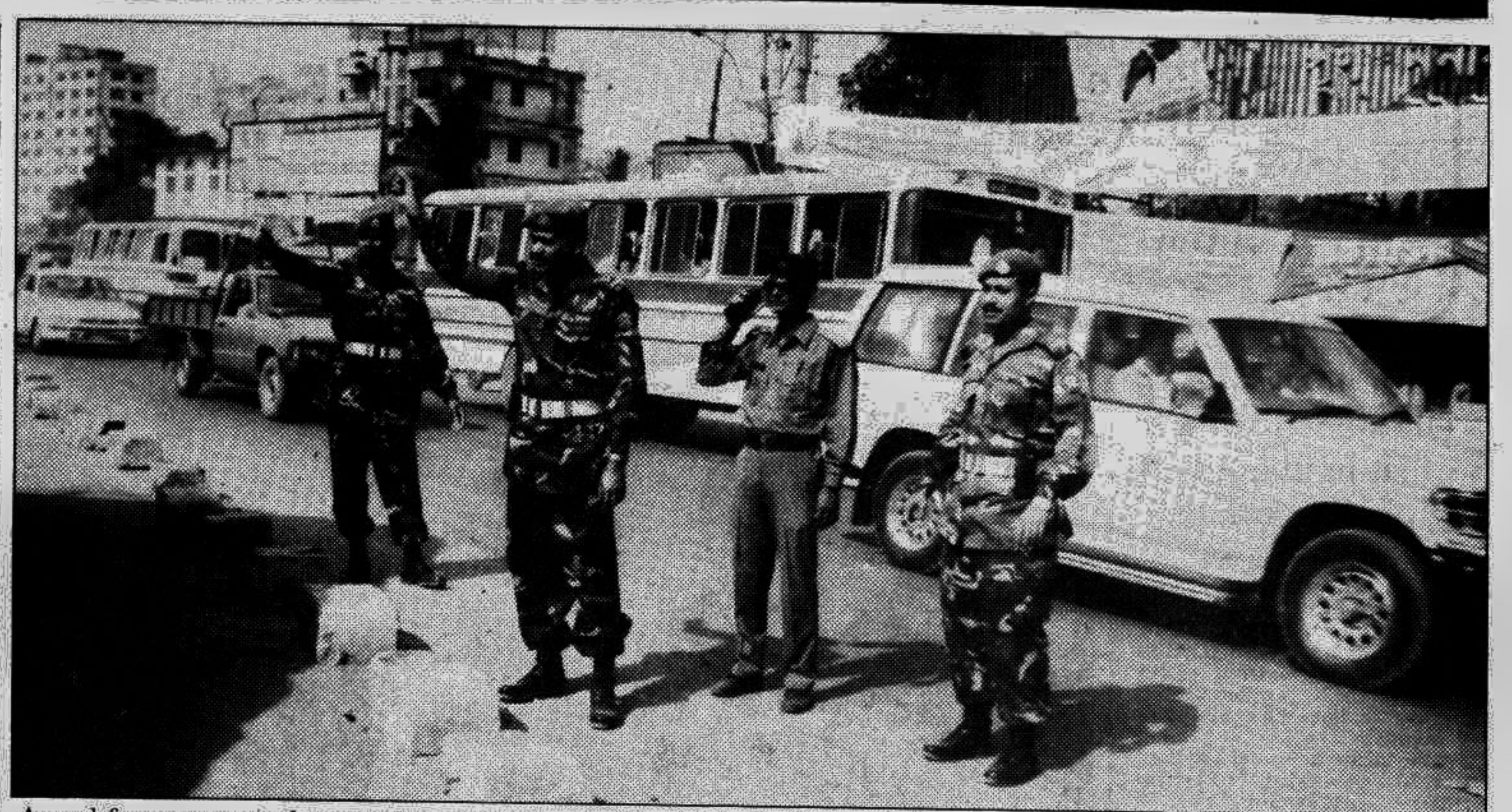
Initiating the discussion, women rights activist Rokeya Ahmed said that there are instances that female students had been harassed sexually by their teachers in the past and investigations had also been carried out. "But no code of conduct was introduced which is very essential."

She also underscored the need for a clear definition of sexual harassment.

Prof Mujaffar Ahmed of Dhaka University said that there is no congenial academic atmosphere on the campus due to politicisation and blamed the DU authorities for it.

He urged the guardians to come forward and play an active role in solving present crisis prevailing on the campus.

Dr Imtiaz Ahmed, Rehmuna Ahmed, Maleka Begum, Shakat Ara, Ishrat Shamim, Rozifa Akonda, Mizanur Rahman, Farah Kabir, Dina Siddique, Zafarullah Chowdhury, Nasreen Haq, Nazma Siddique, Sadeka Halim, Zerina Rahman Khan, Nilufar Banu and Sadiya Kamal also spoke on the occasion.



Armed forces personnel engaged in controlling traffic at Jatrabari where constant traffic jam is a regular feature. —Star photo



Students of ICMAB put up a barricade on the road in front of the institute in Nilkhet yesterday to press home their demands. —Star photo

Seminar on Human Dev report

A seminar on the Human Development Report organised by Economics Study Centre of Dhaka University, was held yesterday, reports UNB.

Addressing the seminar as key-note speaker, Dr Selim Jahan, renowned economist and one of the contributors of the UNDP Human Development (HDR) report, dwelt on various aspects of the report published by the UN body.

He said the unique characteristics of the report are its fearlessness and farsightedness. It depicted the real picture and kept human in the centre of all development activities.

He, however, pointed out some contradictions with growth, an indicator of development followed by World Bank and said, "We do not oppose growth. If growth rate of a country increased by 6 to 9 per cent, the World Bank (WB) will take it as its success but we never give it much importance if there is no participation of people."

"We have certain political objectives by which we want to make understand the problems and their characteristics to the world leaders so that they can take effective steps to ameliorate the condition of their citizens," he said.

Bus strike at Sherpur called off

SHERPUR, Jan 6: The indefinite bus strike enforced by the local Bus Owners Association on eight routes in the district was called off today, reports APB.

The strike, which started on Monday following a dispute with the transport workers, was withdrawn through the intervention of local administration.

The decision for withdrawal of the strike was taken at a two-hour-long meeting at the Deputy Commissioner's office. Police Superintendent of Sherpur was also present.

All buses will ply the routes from tomorrow, the sources said.

3 ICMAB students hurt in police action

By DU Correspondent

Three students of the Institute of Cost and Management Accounts of Bangladesh were injured in police action in the institute premises yesterday.

Of the injured, Asad, a first level student of the institute, was admitted to the PG Hospital with injuries in his head.

Witnesses said the students of the ICMAB, under the banner of Andolan Bajtabayan Parisad (ABP), brought out a procession in the morning to press home their 20-point demand.

But they were intercepted and beaten up by police in the institute premises at about noon when they were preparing for a sit-in programme on Kataban and Nilkhet.

The students, however, observed their scheduled programme ignoring police obstacle.

National Press Club Repolling for post of president on Jan 9

The repolling for the post of president of the Jatiya Press Club (JPC) will be held at the club on January 9, reports BSS.

The date for the repolling was finalised at the first meeting of the newly-elected management committee of the club yesterday.

The repolling is required as the two presidential candidates — Shafiqur Rahman of The Daily Ittefaq and Khondker Monirul Alam of The Weekly Holiday — polled equal number of votes in the December 30 elections.

The repolling will take place from 9-30 am to 5 pm with one-hour break from 1 pm to 2 pm.

JPC general secretary Swapan Kumar Saha has requested the members to participate in the repolling.

Sri Lanka hands over annual contribution to ICDDR,B

Sri Lanka has given its 1998 annual contribution to ICDDR,B, the centre for health and population research, says a press release.

This donation was made in recognition of the importance of the centre's work for developing countries throughout the world, and in recognition of the value of the centre's training programmes for Sri Lankans.

E G Dayananda, the Sri Lankan High Commissioner to Dhaka, visited the centre to present the cheque to the centre's Interim Director Professor George Fuchs. The centre's senior officials John Winkelmann, Dr Ishitque Zaman and Vanessa Brooks were present during the hand over ceremony.

ICDDR,B has trained over a thousand scientists and health professionals from the SAARC and ASEAN regions in diarrhoeal disease management, laboratory techniques, research methods, and family planning programmes and reproductive health since 1978.



Sri Lanka has given its 1998 annual contribution to ICDDR,B, the Centre for Health and Population Research. E G Dayananda, the Sri Lankan High Commissioner to Bangladesh, handed over the cheque to the Centre's Interim Director Professor George Fuchs in a simple ceremony during his recent visit to the Centre.

Time extended

The government has extended the time limit to distribute and submit forms for allotting khas agricultural land among some categories of families till January 31, reports UNB.

As per the government decision families of landless, distressed freedom fighters, erosion-hit by rivers, widows or abandoned women, homeless and landless due to government acquisition will be provided with khas agricultural lands.

The interested families have been requested to contact the offices of the concerned Deputy Commissioners, TNOs and Assistant Commissioners (Land).

Young woman commits suicide

CHITTAGONG, Jan 6: Bakul Akhtar, a young housewife, allegedly committed suicide at Kadamtali near Baitus Saraf here today, reports BSS.

Doublemooing police said Bakul Akhtar ended her life by hanging herself following a quarrel with her husband Nazrul Islam, a garments worker.

Her body was sent to Chittagong General Hospital for autopsy.

Road link with N dists disrupted for six hours

SIRAJGANJ, Jan 6: Road communication between the capital and some northern districts disrupted for six hours following raising of a barricade by a group of bus and truck workers here today, reports UNB.

Bus-Truck Samikha Union put up the barricade in front of Judge Court on Dhaka-Bogra highway at 6 am demanding stoppage of operation of shallow engine-driven tempos on the streets.

All kind of vehicles remained off the road and many stranded till noon.

The workers withdrew the barricade at noon after getting positive assurance from the Police Super.

AIIESEC to hold 7-day confce from Feb 1

Bangladesh chapter of AIIESEC, the Netherlands based non-political students association is going to hold a seven-day international conference in the city on "The Millennium Conference" focusing on the issue of entrepreneurship in the 21st century, reports BSS.

The conference which begins on February 1, has been designed to enhance the cultural and economic relations among the member countries, and highlighting Bangladesh's role and contribution in the global economy in the coming 21st century. AIIESEC, Bangladesh chapter president Fahad M Karim said this at a press conference today.

More than two hundred students from 15 countries as well as reported panel of national and international speakers are expected to participate in this conference, Karim said.

Replying to a question about AIIESEC he said, the aims and objectives of the organisation is to contribute to the development of our countries and their people with an overriding commitment to international understanding and cooperation.

Apparel exhibition opens

The three-day apparel exhibition of Soundarya, a temporary crafts shop for Eid was opened at the west Panthapath in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed inaugurated the exhibition.

Sarees, saris, kameez and panjabis are on display at the exhibition, which has been drawing a large number of visitors.

Speaking on the occasion Prof Sayeed expressed the hope that local apparels would increasingly attract the buyers from home and abroad through new innovations.

He had words of praise for Ms Nurat Jahan, sponsor of the exhibition who is also the designer of the apparels for organising the exhibition using local fabrics.

Local bodies' polls to be held in due time: Tofail

BORHANUDDIN, Bhola, Jan 6: Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed categorically said today that city corporation, pourasava and upazila elections would be held in due time and at any cost, reports APB.

He was exchanging views with the leaders of different political parties, elite people of the town, college and school teachers and representatives of union parishads at Borhanuddin thana parishad auditorium.

The major opposition parties today set a four-point pre-conditions including resignation of the Chief Election Commissioner and giving voters' identity cards within 30 days for participating in the local bodies' elections.

Tofail said all the polls, including parliamentary by-elections and union parishad polls, were held in a free and fair manner under the present government as there was no interference on the part of the administration.

"It is curious that the party which staged voter-less and Magura-style elections during its rule, is now apprehending rigging in city corporation and pourasava elections," Tofail quipped.

Without naming either BNP or Jatiya Party he said the bogey of vote-rigging is being raised because "they can now see their own image in the mirror."

"Being envious of the success of the present government in overall development of the country, they are having a fit of delirium," he added.

The ruling party stalwart said people have rejected the politics of conspiracy, destruction and violence, and they want peace and development so that the country's image can be upheld abroad.

The minister called upon the opposition parties to shun politics of violence and anarchy and to start thinking about the welfare of the people.

While the minister asked local Borhanuddin thana BNP convenor and UP chairman Anwar Hossain Bhuiyan about the development efforts of the government in the area, the latter described those as very encouraging.

Islamic Foundation activities reviewed

A meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Religious Affairs yesterday underscored the need for motivating the affluent section of the society to give Zakat, reports UNB.

The meeting, held at the Sangsad Bhaban with Committee Chairman Shah Haduzzaman in the chair, had a detailed discussion on the overall activities of the Islamic Foundation.

The activities of Zakat Board, Imam Training Academy, and mosque-based mass-education projects also came up for discussion.

The meeting was told that the imams are being imparted training on mass-education, family welfare, pisciculture, first aid, poultry and cattle rearing so that they could contribute to the country's socio-economic development.

Committee members State Minister for Religious Affairs Moulana Nurul Islam, Shahadat Hossain, Panchanan Biswas, Prof Mohammad Abdullah and Abdul Wahab Khan were present in the meeting.

Religious Affairs Secretary Moshed Hossain and senior officials were also present.

Multi-storied building of CCC opens

CHITTAGONG, Jan 6: Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Mayor A B Mohiuddin Chowdhury inaugurated a multi-storied building of the corporation at South Halishahar here today, reports BSS.

Constructed at an expenditure of Taka two crore the building will house South Halishahar ward office and a maternity while 62 shops will be allotted from the ground and the second floors. The maternity will be of 40 beds with modern facilities.

Speaking on the occasion Mayor Mohiuddin said the sprawling port city needed more and more health and shopping centres to cater to the needs of the citizens.

A function held in this connection on the premises of the new building was presided over by local ward commissioner Kamal Uddin.

GEP employees demand arrear salaries

Representatives of the Samannay Parishad, an organisation of the employees of the General Education Project (GEP) under Facilities Department, yesterday urged the government to pay their arrear salaries immediately, reports BSS.

Addressing a press conference at the Shikha Bhaban in the city yesterday evening the leaders of "Samannay Parishad" said that they were not getting their salaries for the last 18 months.

They also demanded integration of their service in the revenue head instead of retaining them in the GEP.

The Samannay Parishad leaders including Abdul Quader and Shahin Ahmed alleged that the fate of 422 employees have become uncertain due to mis-handling of the issue.

RU vacation from Jan 10

RAJSHAHI, Jan 6: Rajshahi University (RU) goes into a 3-week Ramzan and Eid vacation from January 10, reports APB.

After the vacation, the classes at the university will resume on January 30. The offices of the university will remain closed from January 16-25, according to a notification.

120 bottles of phensidyl seized

Police yesterday recovered 120 bottles of Indian phensidyl from a bus and arrested a man in this connection, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip-off, police halted the bus and seized the Indian drugs.

The arrested was identified as Shafiqul Islam, 30, son of late Tara Mia, of 90 Darus Salam, Mirpur.

Obituary

By Staff Correspondent

Begum Safia Khanom, mother of eminent TV personality, journalist and film director Shahidul Haq Khan died on Tuesday morning. She was 70.

Safia Khanom was the daughter of Saltabuddin Sareng of village Medinipur under Bikrampur and wife of gold medal winner in mathematics Mohammad Azizul Haq. She was also the aunt of writer Imdadul Haq Milon.

She left behind two daughters, one son, one son-in-law, grand children and a host of relatives.

Safia was buried at Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals Graveyard.



Jamaat chief Golam Azam addressing a press conference at the party office in the city yesterday. —Star photo

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A DEPOT OF NEGLIGENCE: The picture shows what remains of the Maghbazar-Madhuhag playground. Local residents allege that turning the field into a garbage dump is having a serious effect on the environment of the area. They have urged the DCC to clear up the place as soon as possible. —Star photo by Anisur Rahman