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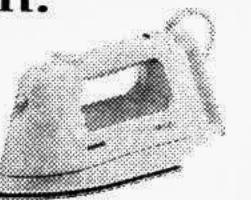
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They only put 'red mark' but can't say where to get 'safe water'

"I don't know if the government officials understand what is the implication of putting red mark on my tubewell. Officials from Dhaka came last year and painted my tubewell neck red and told us not to drink water from it," said an old man in Laxmipur thana of Comilla.

The man, confused about where to get 'safe drinking wa-ter' for his family, said "If they have to come and tell us not to drink arsenic contaminated water, then what is the alternative source of 'safe' drinking water. None of them has given us the alternative."

The old man and his family continue to drink water from the tubewell regardless of the

prevent people from drinking arsenic contaminated water, World Bank and UNDP personnel are putting red or green marks on tubewells (TWs). Red mark prohibits use of water from the TW for drinking and cooking purposes while green mark means the water is 'safe'.

and contaminated TWs in the country is being carried out. Despite the move, at a cost of millions of taka, thousands of villagers in the affected areas continue to use contaminated water. Most of them are confused about where to find 'safe' drinking water.

Under a government move to

A survey on arsenic patients A villager in Comilla ex-

Former president H M Er-

shad favours immediate sum-

mit of top opposition leaders

and framing of a joint declara-

tion to steer the current anti-

government agitation to its

would have been effective and a

guideline for our movement

could be declared to pull down

the government," he told UNB

chief Khaleda Zia was hesitant

to sit together, Ershad said: "I

don't have any doubt about her

sincerity; she is very sincere.

But, you know, there may be dif-

ferences of opinion in a politi-

cal party - some may think one

should go alone, some may

think otherwise, which is quite

said: "Who needs whom . . . For

the sake of a united movement,

movement would lose momen-

tum if the planned summit

could not take place, the JP

chairman said, "We aren't sub-

servient to any party. If we fail

to go together. Jatiya Party has

the strength to go its own way

committee with representatives

of the four opposition parties

had been sitting regularly and

would be announcing simulta-

neous programmes to carry

are in movement, staging har-

From Page 1

mand for reschedulement terms

in line with those of Islam

Group, the judges said further

rescheduling cannot be ex-

tended after serving notices un-

der Section 17 of the Bank

bank's advice to AB Bank re-

garding rescheduling was aimed

at realising the outstanding

under Section 17 as one de-

signed to compel defaulting di-

rectors to vacate their offices

and save the banks from the in-

fluence of directors who abuse

power in managing bank funds.

showed that Beximco Invest-

ment Company Ltd extended

corporate guarantee on May 26.

1994 and the petitioners also

gave personal guarantee regard-

ing liabilities (Tk 98.10 crore at

that time) of the four companies

-- Satkhira Fisheries, Phar-

matek Chemicals Ltd. Mittika

to call back the facility at

any time if there was a viola-

tion of any terms, the judges

petitioners' contention saying

that the CEO acted legally in

serving the notices as it was

part of the day-to-day affair of

the bank and that board ap-

proval was not necessary at all.

the petitioners had failed to

produce anything that re-

strained the MD from acting

Mahmud appeared for AB Bank

while Barrister Tania Amir for

the central bank. They were as-

sisted by Barrister Shanawaz

Akhand, Advocate Mubina Asaf

address: dstar@bangla.net

Barrister Rokunuddin

The judges pointed out that

And the bank reserved the

The judges also refuted the

and Khulna Fisheries.

said.

that way.

The judges said that records

They said that the central

They interpreted the notice

Companies Act 1991.

"As an opposition party, we

forward the agitation.

He, however, said the liaison

with support of the people."

one needs another."

To another question, Ershad

Asked whether the current

Asked if he thought BNP

"I feel that such a summit

logical end.

over telephone.

By Naimul Haq

plained, "Unless we have an option, we have to use tubewell water which we considered 'safe'. Due to the risk of water borne diseases, we avoid using surface water. Besides, most of the ponds and rivers nearby have dried up now. So what can

When contacted, a health ministry official said, "The villagers have been warned about the consequences of drinking contaminated water, but they have not told been told where or how to get 'safe' water. It is the biggest problem following the detection of arsenic contamination of groundwater."

In Abhoynagar thana in Jessore, widow Rehana Begum said, "I have been drinking water from my tubewell for the last 16 years. One day in June last year, some people from the capital came and painted it red and asked us to stop using its

water for drinking and cooking. They gave the warning but failed to give us any solution to the problem."

According to Dhaka Community Hospital (DCH), out of 12,000 TWs surveyed in 64 districts to detect presence of arsenic, about 60 per cent were found to have the toxic metal more than the permissible level of 50 parts per billion (ppb) or 0.05 mg per litre. DCH, in collaboration with

Jadavpur University of Cal-

tal and agitation, and we'll con-

tinue it till our demands are

phonic talks with Khaleda Zia

with regard to the opposition

movement, he said: "Not re-

cently, the last time we ex-

changed greetings was on the

march across the country on

May 16, he said Jatiya Party

would launch 'Road March'

from Dhaka towards My-

get session of Parliament.

didn't boycott Parliament."

and that people wanted it.

"But what we fear is Upazila

elections will not be fair under

the Awami League rule. They

would manipulate election re-

sults so that the elected chair-

men could work for Awami

League in national elections. So

we have demanded both Par-

liament and Upazila elections

under neutral caretaker admin-

a threat after the floating of a

faction led by Mizan-Manju,

Ershad claimed he is the main-

stream and ultimately all MPs

Rahman and Advocate Sheikh

Salman F Rahman and Sohel

Rahman while Barrister Naz-

mul Huda for MA Quashem and

Huda said the High Court divi-

sion bench "discharged the rule

obtained by ASF Rahman and

others against the order passed

by Bangladesh Bank forward-

ing therewith the notice issued

by Arab Bangladesh Bank Ltd

under Section 17 of the Bank

petitioners "challenged the or-

der of Bangladesh Bank on the

ground that Bangladesh Bank

being the higher as well as ap-

pellate authority had caused the

issuance of the notice and as

fore the High Court Division

that Bangladesh Bank in the

meantime on 26.02.98 has di-

rected the Arab Bangladesh

Bank limited to reschedule the

"On enquiry from the peti-

tioners' counsel, the court

stated that they have not passed

any order about the loss of of-

fice of director and that their

order shall not stand in the way

signed lawyer), in view of the

stay order granted on 16.02.98

the period of 60 days has not yet

expired. Only four days expired

before the rule was discharged.

So legally the directorship

shall continue till the expiry of

the period of 54 days from the

date the rule was discharged

and in the meantime if the lia-

bility of Beximco Group is

rescheduled by Arab

Bangladesh Bank, the effect of

Section 17 notice shall cease."

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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"In our opinion (the under-

loan of Beximco Group.

of rescheduling the loan.

"It was further submitted be-

The press release said the

K Z Alam appeared for

A press release signed by

Asked if his party was facing

istration," he said.

would be with him.

Hassan Arif.

Iqbal Ahmed.

Companies Act".

such it was illegal.

Five defaulters lose

About the forthcoming bud-

On the opposition's long

Eid day," said Ershad.

mensingh on the day.

Asked if he had any tele-

Ershad for summit of top

opposition leaders

cutta, was the first in the country to detect arsenic patient. The fist patient was found in 1989 in Chapainawabganj.

The survey report said that 52 districts were affected by the groundwater arsenic contamination and over 2,700 patients were suffering from cancer related to toxic effect of arsenic. Thousands of other people across the country are at risk of being affected by arsenic contamination.

Dr Shibtosh Roy of DCH, who has wide experience of conducting surveys for arsenic patients and affected tubewells, said, "We find it hard to convince people not to continue using contaminated water. To them, red or green marks are meaningless unless they are given a choice."

He added, "On an average, out of every 100 families in the affected areas, about 30 per cent are found to be affected by severe arsenic poisoning."

Meanwhile, experts are divided over providing 'treated surface water' or continuing to install TWs as a solution to the contamination problem.

Some experts point out that treated surface water is the best source of 'safe' drinking water. But Unicef says that as long as there is no concrete decision on surface water options, groundwater is the safest source of drinking water in Bangladesh.

Tomorrow's hartal

Campaign on to drum up support

By Staff Correspondent The BNP-led opposition alliance will observe a half-day countrywide hartal tomorrow to protest electricity, water-gas crisis, deterioration of law and order, and government's "failures" in different sectors.

The hartal will begin at 6 am

on Tuesday. BNP. Jatiya Party, Jamaate-Islami and Islamic Oikya Jote simultaneously called the hartal from separate public rallies

summoned to sit on June 6, Erin the city on May 3. shad said his party would go to The four parties have started the House. "Definitely I will atcampaign in the capital city tend the budget session . . . we and elsewhere in the country to drum up support for the shut-He said Jatiya Party will down. BNP and its front organiparticipate in the Upazila elecsations yesterday brought out a tions. He added that creation of series of processions in differ-Upazila system by his governent thanas chanting slogans in favour of the hartal and against ment was a "social revolution" the government.

> Meanwhile, Jamaat will observe countrywide demonstration day today protesting corruption, terrorism and repression on women.

World Cup

Essex, chasing a revised target of 205 in 34 overs after rain had stopped play for over an hour, were restricted to 199 for eight thanks to some accurate bowling from left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique who returned with four for 44 from his seven overs. Left-arm tweaker Enamul Hoque and off-spinner Aminul kept the pressure on Essex batsmen sharing four wickets evenly between them.

Bangla commentary Bangladesh Betar is all set to broadcast ball-by-ball Bangla commentary of all five matches of Bangladesh.

Shamim Ashraf Chowdhury and Chowdhury Zafarullah Sharafat will be the commenta-

After their first match against New Zealand on May 17, Bangladesh will play take on West Indies on May 21 at Dublin, Scotland on May 24 at Edinburgh, Australia on May 27 at Chester-le-Street and Pakistan on May 31 at Northamp-

Hunger strike

From Page 1 technical assistance. It started commercial production in 1967 with an investment of Tk 300 crores.

Since then there was no capital restructuring of the mill that forced it to lag behind, sources said. The installed production capacity of the mill was 2.5 lakh MT a year.

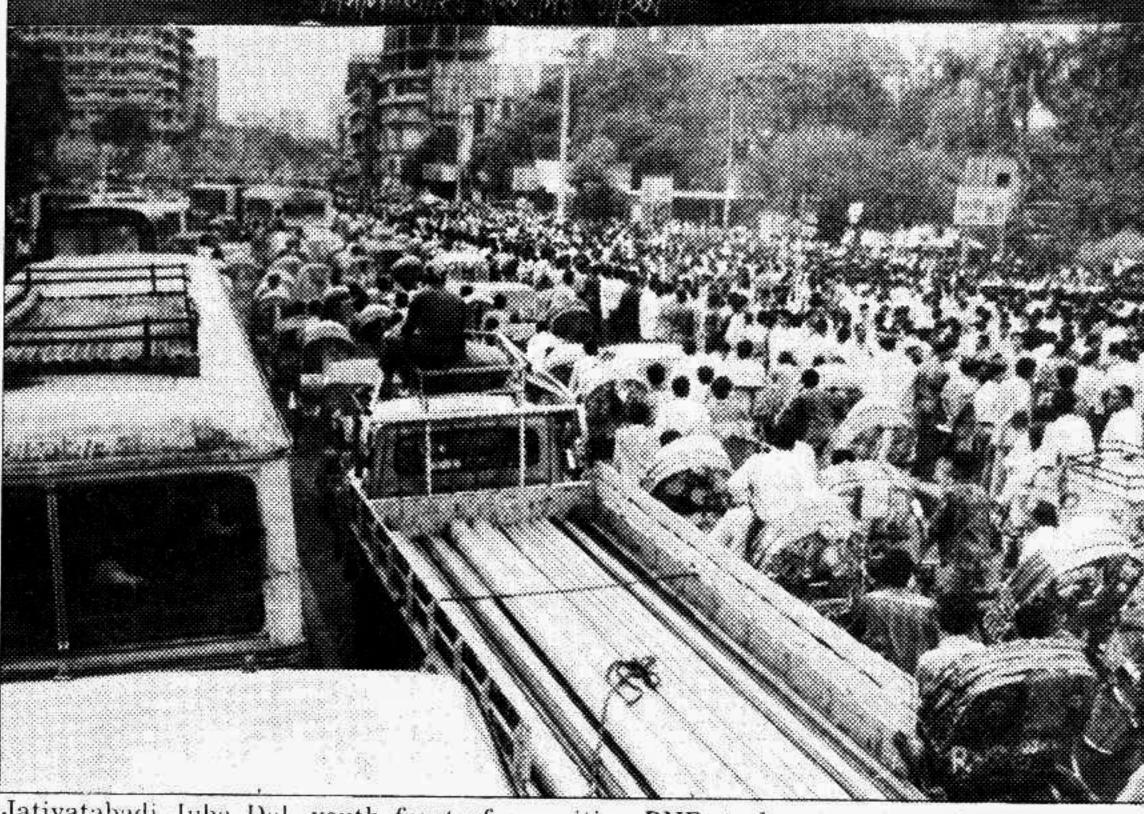
UNB adds: The Chittagong Steel Mills will remain under layoff for next two years. Efforts will be taken to restart the public-sector industrial unit by modernising it under a joint venture, sources said.

The CBA claimed that the mill could be made profitable if the authorities provided a working capital of Tk 40 crore. Bangladesh Steel and Engineering Corporation sources here said the pay-off decision was finalised at a high-level

meeting of the government on May 5. The district administration is being assigned to execute the 'golden-handshake' plan, they

told UNB. Earlier, it was scheduled to be laid off on March 31, but the decision was held back in the face of resistance from the em-

ployees and workers. The responsibilities of the schools and madrassahs run by the mill will be transferred to the district administration.



Jatiyatabadi Juba Dal, youth front of opposition BNP, took out a procession in the city yesterday demanding jobs for youths and protesting 'police repression' (top), and traffic congestion caused by the Juba Dal rally (above). - Star photo by Sk Enamul Haq

Jubo Dal demands jobs for youths

By Staff Correspondent

Hundreds of leaders and activists of Jatiyatabadi Juba Dal, youth front of BNP, yesterday paraded different city streets demanding jobs for the unemployed youths and protesting arrest and police harassment "without any cause".

Juba Dal city unit organised the procession that started from Muktangan and terminated at Shahbagh crossing. The processionists chanted various anti-government slogans.

Earlier, a rally was held with city unit president Abu Sayeed Khan Khokon in the chair. BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Moudud Ahmed, Sadek Hossain Khoka, Juba Dal president Mirza Abbas and general secretary Gayeshwar Chandra Roy addressed the rally.

Mannan Bhuiyan said the Awami League government has frustrated the youth community as it failed to provide jobs to lakhs of unemployed youths. both literate and illiterate. Not only that, in a pre-

planned way the government is destroying the youths by allowing smuggling of various drugs. especially phensidyl syrup.

On terrorism, the BNP secretary general said both the Prime Minister and the Home Minister frequently preach that all are equal before law, the government is not arresting terrorists belonging to the ruling party's student wing. They were freely moving on the Dhaka University campus and

were clashing among themselves, he mentioned.

Besides, the government is yet to arrest ruling party MP even after detection of a bomb factory and explosions at his house at Chhatak. Similarly no action was taken as yet against the killers of Sajal Chowdhury, who are also moving freely.

Bhuiyan said the administration has totally collapsed due to politicisation of the government.

He asked the government to step down immediately and hand over power to caretaker administration for mid-term national polls. Otherwise, he warned, the government would be dislodged through mass movement.

HSC exams: 522 more expelled

At least 522 examinees were expelled for adopting unfair means in 18 districts on the third day of the HSC examinations yesterday, officials said, reports UNB.

The district-wise breakup Dhaka City-6, Narayanganj-8, Narsindi-20, Munshiganj-10, Manikganj-4, Mymensingh-56, Sherpur-23, Netrakona-50, Faridpur-22, Gopalganj-19, Rajbari-6, Shariatpur-11, Comilla-54. Brahmanbaria-71, Chandpur-25, Feni-67, Laxmipur-6, Habiganj-19, Barisal-39,

Terrorists will be brought to book: Hasina Prime Minister Sheikh

Hasina yesterday said her government would not protect anybody involved in acts of terrorism at the cost of her party image, report agencies. She reiterated her stand that

terrorists whoever they are would be brought to book. The anti-social elements and trouble makers have no political colour and identity, they are mere criminals, she added. BNP is indulging in "nega-

tive politics" and is trying to invent issues by killing people and creating anarchy, she said. "BNP has taken a plan to

spend crores of taka for creating anarchy in the country by unleashing terrorism and vandalism," she said. She was speaking at a function on the joining of Jatiya

Party Organising Secretary Feroz Kabir in Awami League. The function was held at the International Conference Centre in the city yesterday. Several hundred leaders and

workers of Savar Jatiya Party. led by Feroz Kabir, shifted their allegiance to the ruling party.

The prime minister charged BNP with instigating "terrorism" and warned that terrorist acts would be dealt with a strong hand.

Even action will be taken against those who will try to damage her party image by resorting to terrorism, she said, adding that law will take its own course and legal actions will be against any criminal.

Durban convention to focus on eco-tourism

From M Anwarul Haq

DURBAN, May 9: Nearly 1300 delegates from 60 countries including Bangladesh, representing product exhibitors, tour operators, airlines and service sectors, have congregated here for a four-day International Tourism Marketing Convention, called IND-

Billed as South Africa's premier trade showpiece, the annual exhibition — INDABA the biggest so far, was opened today by Dr Pallo Jordan, Min-ister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism.

Nearly 800 exhibitors have opened stalls displaying a wide array of tourism services and packages. The focus of the convention is on eco-tourism which recently became a matter of growing global attention and attraction by travellers in a world where environmental concerns are being addressed by governments and people alike.

The convention has been organised at the International Conference Centre, a few metres from the wonderful "golden mile" that runs along the Durban coastline and a number of unspoilt beaches on the eastern shores of the Indian Ocean.

Durban, which also harbours the largest port in South Africa, has a population of nearly one million with a cosmopolitan flavour having an unique composition of indigenious Africans, Asians, whites and foreigners.

Nearly half of Durban's population are of Sub-continental origin, including Bangladeshis, Indians, Pakistanis, Sri Lankans.

The word INDABA is derived from the Zulu language, meaning a meeting, or get-together. INDABA is providing a platform for tour operators to exchange information and create business opportunities. Bangladesh delegate at the

conference Zahid Hossain, who looks after South African Airways in Dhaka and is leading a team of half a dozen leading tour operators says, "INDABA will give an opportunity to familiarise our people with services and facilities provided by South Africa, which is now

opening up as an emerging des-tination for business and recre-

Nearly eight lakh tourists visited South Africa last year. Even Westerners who traditionally choose a European or American destination now opt for SA, which has excellent infrastructure facilities and offers 'African game safaris', bird sanctuaries, eco-diving and exotic sites with plenty of moun-

tains and scenic spots. The INDABA, organised by South African Tourism Board (Satour), is being held at the juncture of South Asia's second all-race democratic elections. scheduled for June 2.

"For any tourist or occasional traveller there is a lot of Eco-tourism to be discovered in South Africa," says G A Pretorius of the SA Tourism Board. Indeed the face of South

Africa has changed a lot and it is now in a position to reveal its "real beauty of people and na-ture" says Julie Morna, a computer programmer, whose forefathers migrated to SA from the Sub-continent nearly a century ago. Explaining the change since the election of Nelson Mandela in the first all-race elections in 1994 she said:

"South Africa is a melting pot of people and places. It is steeped in old traditions but has undergone sweeping political reforms. People can now have a look at all the radical changes in the political field and social fabric against its rich reservoir of unchanged and unspoilt natural richness," said Julie Morna who considers herself 'a born again' South African.

Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, one of the main contestants in the upcoming elections. says the country has a vision of an African Renaissance and the INDABA will instill a new spirit of celebration.

INDABA will give the participants from around the globe a chance to look at South Africa in its new garb. Only few countries offer so much of splendour as South Africa spread over 1.2 million square kilometres No wonder, the authorities

here speak of South Africa as "A World in One Country."

Kidnapped businessman rescued in Ctg

here today rescued a kidnapped businessman and arrested one person in this connection, reports UNB.

Haji Soleman Sawdagar was kidnapped from near a school in Chandgaon thana on Satur-

Leave to appeal

the Speaker.

tion that since Dr. Alauddin and Md Hasibur Rahman Swapan took over as State Minister and Deputy Minister respectively in the AL government, it is a case of floor crossing and hence their memberships of the

parliament are not valid. Attorney General Mahmudul Islam with Advocate on-record DAG Bakhtiar Hossain and AAG Bazlur Rahman Chhana moved for the Secretary of the Jatiyo Sangsad, while barrister Moudud Ahmed appeared for Khondker Delwar Hossain and

an illegal action.

moved the writ on behalf of BLAST, while Altafur Rahman, Shahnaz Babli and A Mannan Khan assisted him.

Exam centres

From Page 1

Shikkhak Samity Federation Sheikh Amanullah said BDR could be deployed at the troubled centres as an immediate step to contain the violence that has put almost the entire public examination system at stake.

President of BCS Sadharan Shikkha Samity Prof Janab Ali also said that BDR deployment can be an effective alternative measure in the present situation. "We must protect the sanity and trustworthiness of public examination at any cost and deployment of BDR at troubled examination centres can be an effective step in this

General Secretary of Bangladesh College Shikkhak Samity Kazi Faruk Ahmed demanded that the security of teachers and prevention of malpractice in the public examination system be ensured at any cost. "Any effective step in this regard is welcome," he said.

Rape: 2 held From Page 1

The police officer said there was more to the story. "The UP member had been made chairman of a sanitation project which resulted in a conflict of interests between her and the alleged rapists," he said and added that the UP chairman

properly. The SP said the victim had been shifted to an apartment in the Thana complex where she was being treated. "I talked to the victim today and ordered the TNO and OC of Pakundia thana to take care of her," the

also did not handle the issue

SP said last night by phone. He said the victim was still suffering from the trauma Raushan did her SSC in 1976, and was elected UP mem-

ber last year under the new local government law providing for direct election of a female member in each union.

From Page 1 in January, but held back in the

face of resistance from the dock workers. Meanwhile, the plan for

construction of a 22-km Patenga-Fouzderhat bypass to the private port site is almost complete. International Development

Assistance (IDA), a soft-lending window of the World Bank, has agreed to sanction a grant worth Tk 250 crore for the pro-

Tears not enough From Page 1

He is not sure what was mixed with the drink. "Probably it was methanol not ethanol or rectified spirit. Taking of methanol is always fatal," he said. Methanol is a chemical used for varieties of purposes, including varnishing and painting.

But the DMCH is yet to determine what it was as it has very limited facility to test the viscera. A few viscera have been taken for tests from the victims, Rafiquddin said.

Outside, the long rows of squatting relatives of the victims continued their efforts, praying and hoping against hope that their dear ones would

survive. On the long corridors waited Roni, 12, and Puja, 4, for their father Tansen, a sweeper of the Narsingdi Sonali Bank. Their mother Durga Rani was inside

beside Tansen. Chaturdas, brother-in-law of Tansen, said it was a way of life for the town's poor and impoverished working class to wash off tiredness from day's work and their worries with a bottle of cheap liquor, be it is from homeopathy shops or vendors, even if it means sickness or empty stomachs for

He also takes it. But the sad events made him thinking of giving it up, he said. The guilt had forced 11 patients to run away as they could

families.

not bear the probing questions, contempt and the deaths in their midst, hospital employees

Export Market Development programme approved The government undertook a Electronic Visa Information

comprehensive Export Market Development Programme for 1999-2000 under which electronic commerce and visa system for exporters will be introduced, reports UNB.

The programme was approved yesterday at a Management Board meeting of the Export Promotion Bureau with Commerce and Industries Minister and Chairman of the Board Tofail Ahmed in the chair.

It also includes participation in 27 international trade fairs, arranging two singlecountry fairs and sending marketing missions abroad to develop Bangladeshi market. The international trade fairs where Bangladesh is

scheduled to participate include those in USA, Germany, Japan, Italy, UAE, India, Australia, Turkey, Spain, Iran, Hong Kong, South Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and In these fairs the exportable

of Bangladesh, including knit and woven garments, ceramics, melamine, leather and footwear, frozen foods, tea. jute and jute goods, fashionable items, handicrafts, toiletries. medicine, houseware, natural flower and other manufacturers, will be displayed. The two countries where the

meeting decided to arrange single-country fairs are Nepal and South Africa. It will also send three mar-

keting missions to USA. France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Japan, UK and Belgium to explore markets of new products in the respective countries. Bangladesh participated in

26 International Trade Fairs in the current fiscal year under the same programme with 183 private and public trade organisations joining the exhibitions. The companies got spot export orders of 12 million dol-

lars, future order of 30 million dollars and 461 trade inquiries from the foreign buyers. The EPB has also taken steps to formulate its own web page to make available exportable goods in the electronic commerce transactions that is

scheduled to start from July A five-member committee was formed headed by Commerce Secretary for selecting site and other measures to establish at least three 'garments pallis' outside the capital.

Other members of the committee are Industries Secretary BGMEA President, BSCIC Chairman and Vice-chairman of EPB. The meeting also discussed

The meeting asked the EPB to take stern action against the parties involved in quota forgery, including forced shutdown of business. Speaking in the meeting Tofail asked the EPB to introduce

quota distribution procedure

for garments export to USA and

Canada.

have rebuilt the image through long endeavor," said the minister about malpractice in the trade. Tofail said the government had taken various steps to increase country's export earn-

ings. To expand export trade the

System to stop visa forgery in

garments export and speedy

discharge of export formalities.

tarnish our image outside as we

'We cannot allow anybody to

government is providing all out support to the initiatives of private sector, he added. The Commerce Minister also said that the World Bank had committed 46 million US dollars as matching grant fund to diversify export basket.

He, however, mentioned that the government had taken various measures to face the future challenges of export, including eco-labelling, human rights and environmental issues, in producing export goods. The meeting also discussed

setting up of a foreign trade institute in Dhaka, establishment of BGMEA Bhaban, construction of World Trade Centre and infrastructure facilities for software export. Commerce Secretary Sayed

Alamgir Farrouk Chowdhury, Former adviser to the caretaker government Syed Manzur Elahi, BGMEA President Anisur Rahman Sinha, EPB Vice-Chairman AB Chowdhury and representatives of ministries concerned were present.

CHITTAGONG, May 9: Police

day night.

From Page Badruddoza Chowdhury, Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament filed a writ petition challenging the ruling of

It was argued in the writ peti-

Professor AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury.

Rajuk

From Page 1 high rise commercial building in place of open space earmarked for a car park, the petition mentioned and termed it

The rule is returnable within eight weeks. Barrister Shafique Ahmed

centres across the country over supplying answer sheets to the students in the examination halls. Talking to The Daily Star.

Chairman of Bangladesh

regard," Prof Ali said.