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Rashidpur Gasfield 2 gas zones found in well 7, drilling on

From Iqbal Siddiquee

SYLHET, June 2: Two gas zones have been struck in Well 7 at Rashidpur Gasfield in Habiganj and drilling is going on.

"We have struck two prospective gas sand zones at a depth of 2200 metres and 2595 metres," an official told this correspondent yesterday evening.

After completion of "casting and logging of the well during the last few days, we are now more optimistic about the prospect of the well," the official added.

A German firm, 'Schemberger', has been engaged in logging. The authorities are going ahead with further drilling of the well and there is every possibility of striking more gas sand zones. The targeted depth of drilling is 9000 feet, he said.

Drilling of the well began on April 22. The authorities of

Sylhet Gasfields Limited (SGL), which is implementing the project, expect to complete it by the end of June of early July. The well is second of the three to be drilled in the same structure under the project 'Gas Infrastructure Development Programme (GIDP)', financed by the World Bank and the IDA.

Drilling of the first well, Rashidpur-5, began on January 5 this year and was completed successfully in the first week of April. The well is now ready for production as a 'good gas sand zone' was struck at a depth of 8950 feet, the official said.

Well-7 is located on a hilltop in Brindaban Tea Estate area of Bahubal thana in Habiganj. After completion of drilling of this well, Rashidpur-6 Well will be drilled, at a location which is also on a hilltop and six km off the well-Rashidpur-5.

US plane with 145 aboard crashes

LITTLE ROCK (Arkansas). June 2: American Airlines today confirmed at least one fatality in the overnight crash of a MD-80 plane with 145 people aboard in Little Rock, Arkansas, reports AFP.

American Airlines vice president Bob Baker told a press conference in Fort Worth, Texas, that the captain of the MD-80 sustained a "fatal injury."

"There are confirmed fatalities and survivors. But we don't have an exact count," he added, noting that the identity of 86 of the 139 passengers aboard the ill-fated plane had been verified and would be released shortly.

Woman released

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4, 1997 and sent to jail. The CMM's Court had then ordered her release on August 10, 1997.

Being informed, Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) took initiative for release of the woman.

BNWLA officials yesterday said Putul had to suffer for two years in the jail only for bureaucratic tangles.

BNWLA took her in its custody after her release. It is to send her back to her relatives immediately.

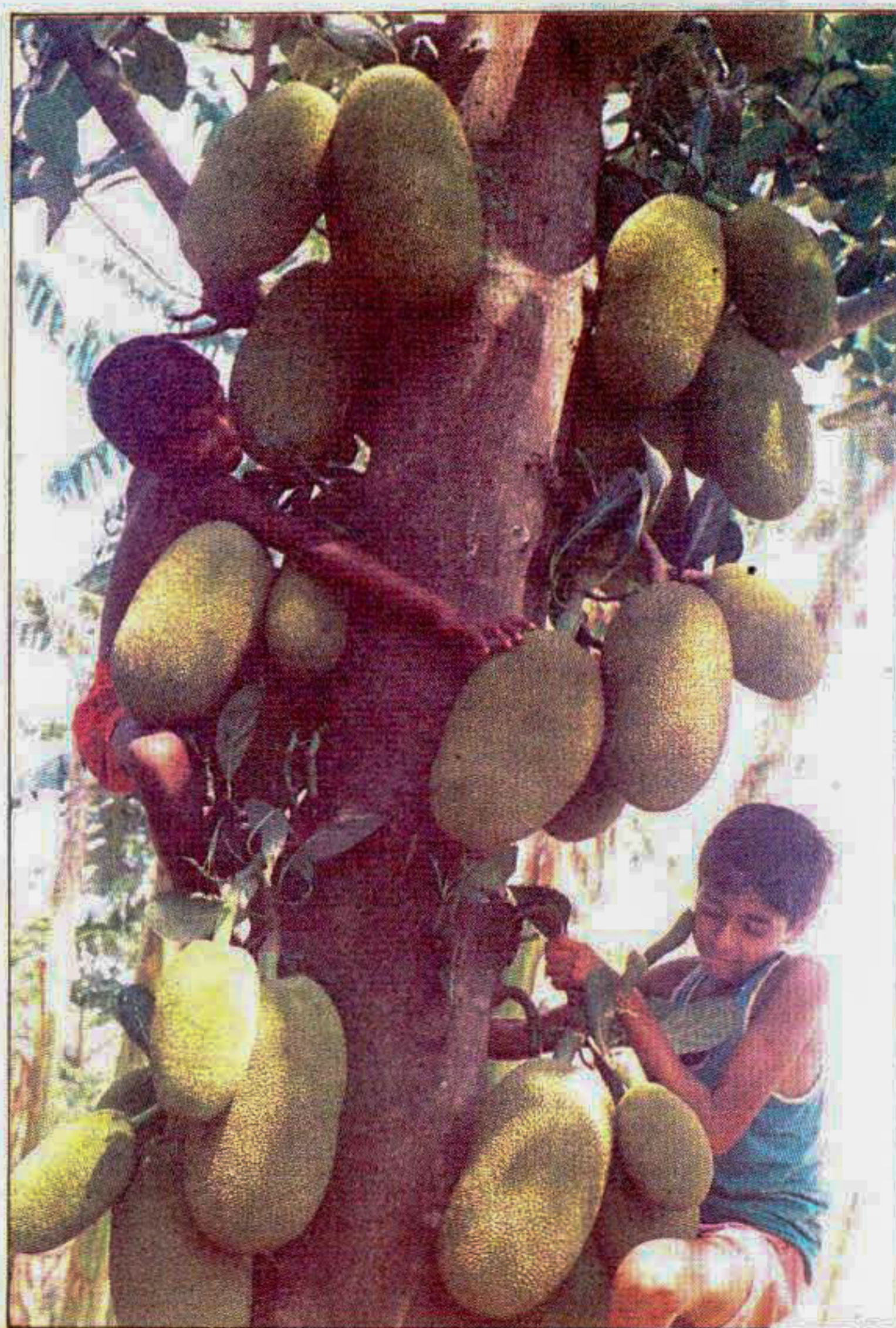
Ward commissioners

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when he reached Chaldotali bazar on way to City Corporation office at around 10 am, police said.

He was rushed to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to injuries soon after admission. Chittagong City Corporation sources said Liakat was murdered as a sequel to previous enmity.

Local people said the assailants came to the spot by a microbus and shot him point blank. They fled the scene boarding the same vehicle.

Liakat was buried today after a *namaz-e-janaza* held at Lalidighi maidan.



Jackfruits have already hit the market and traders say there's more to come. Good news, but buyers say prices are a bit too high. — Star photo by AKM Mohsin



A view from the Gully

From Page 1
round. And to reach the semifinals stage they have to win all three matches they are to play. But that will not be possible for both teams. So, one will have to bow out.

India have not only a very strong batting line up on paper but in practice also. They have never scored anything under 200 and are in fact the only team to have scored more than 300 on two occasions. Their 373 against Sri Lanka is still the highest total in this tournament. To the credit of their batsmen goes the four centuries scored by Sachin Tendulkar, Saurav Ganguly and two consecutive tons by Rahul Dravid.

Between Saurav and Rahul they hold the world record of 318 runs for any wicket. Barring Mohanty, Prasad and Srinath, all the other eight can bat competently and that can cause concern for their opponents.

Australia's performance in this World Cup with such a specialist one-day outfit is far from satisfactory. Their batsmen are struggling for runs and bowlers have to be penetrating to dent the strong Indian batting. But the silver lining for them is the sudden return to form by Adam Gilchrist, their main bowler Glenn McGrath and spinner Shane Warne.

Most well-placed in the two groups are Pakistan and,

strangely enough, Zimbabwe who have four points each from the first round — Pakistan from wins over Australia and New Zealand and Zimbabwe from India and South Africa. So, if these two teams win a match each they will be through to the semis.

New Zealand and South Africa have two points each against Australia and India respectively and will have to win two matches each for a semifinal berth. So all the matches in this round will be crucial for all the six teams. There is hardly any room for complacency for any team and that has been unmistakably proved by Zimbabwe and Bangladesh.

All the six have tasted defeat — Australia, New Zealand, India and Zimbabwe two defeats each while Pakistan and South Africa, the favourites one each.

So it's going to be another nine days of top class cricket. Fasten your seat belt. You are about to take off.

Correction: New Zealand were to get past Scotland's total of 121 in 21.2 overs to qualify for the Super Six and not 20 overs as printed inadvertently in this column yesterday. The mistake is regretted. And there's one oversight by our copy desk. The day our boys created history was **May 31, 1999**, not 1991.

BTV to telecast live civic reception

Bangladesh Television will telecast live the civic reception to be accorded to the Bangladesh cricket squad at the National Parade Square, an official press release said yesterday, reports BSS.

The cricketers will be escorted straight to the square on arrival at the Zia International Airport tomorrow at 10 am.

Politicians

From Page 1

would be held at Paltan Maidan.

The mayor claimed he had spoken to leaders of the major parties to issue the invitation. BNP's Sadeq Hossain Khoka told the mayor that he would let him know later if someone would attend the Nagar Bhaban meeting. Hanif said, "But he didn't call back."

BNP sources said Khoka was advised by party chief Khaleda Zia not to attend. Khoka could not be reached for confirmation.

Similarly, the mayor phoned Manirul Huq Chowdhury of Ershad-led JP who also agreed to join the meeting. But he did not turn up, the mayor said.

Speaking to The Daily Star after the meeting, Hanif said he had invited all the parties to the reception while talking to them on phone and that Awami League leader Abdul Jalil had sent an invitation to the BNP.

Meanwhile, Obaiddul Quader told The Daily Star last night that they were not going to distribute invitation cards for tomorrow's reception "because of time constraints".

"But the mayor will personally contact the opposition leaders and others to invite them to the programme," the minister said.

Only the PM, the sports minister, BCB president and the captain of Bangladesh cricket team and "others concerned" would speak on the occasion, Quader said.

Representatives of the political parties, if present, would have seats on the dais, but would not be allowed to speak, he added.

Those who attended the mayor's meeting included Quader, CHT minister Kalpanjan Chakma, state minister for primary and mass education Zinnatunnessa Talukder, AL leaders Abdul Mannan and Abdul Jalil, JSD's Nur Alam Ziku, Dhaka University VC Prof AK Azad Choudhury and commissioners of different DCC wards were also present.

According to a press release from the mayor's office, the prime minister will attend as chief guest tomorrow's reception, chaired by the mayor. The PM is expected to distribute gifts among the cricketers she had promised earlier.

The two major parties behaved in a similar manner two years ago when Bangladesh won the ICC Trophy.

BNP boycotted a civic reception for the ICC Trophy winners, organised by an AL-led national committee at the Manik Mia Avenue on April 14, 1997. The PM attended it.

A few days later, BNP organised a separate reception at the Minto Road official residence of Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia, which she attended.

Delhi offers safe passage for guerillas Another school hit, 3 more killed in Pak Kashmir

ISLAMABAD, June 2: Pakistan's Kashmir government ordered all schools along the shell-ravaged border closed today after a second school was hit in as many days by Indian shells. Three children were killed, said police, reports AP.

On Tuesday 10 high school students were killed when Indian artillery shells pounded border villages in the Neelum Valley.

Today a primary school in Nar some 260 kilometers south of Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-ruled Kashmir, was struck by several shells, according to police in the area.

Two teachers also were injured. Pakistan's military accused the Indian troops of deliberately targeting the schools.

After the second attack today the government of Pakistan-ruled Kashmir ordered all schools closed accusing the Indian soldiers of "war crimes".

"Even in an open war, such

an act is a war crime under the United Nations Charter," said Sahabzada Ishaq Zafar, acting prime minister of Pakistan-ruled Kashmir. "We condemn this act of India and seek help from the United Nations to stop this killing of young children and resolve this issue."

India has denied the accusation. The report is false and... aimed at maligning the Indian army," an Indian Defence Ministry statement said.

India will consider safe passage for Islamic guerillas if they retreat into Pakistan from the Himalayan heights they have seized in India, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said today.

On the battle front, Indian warplanes renewed their campaign shortly after dawn against the guerillas entrenched on the snowy ridge of mountains on the Indian side of the unofficial border.

Batteries of long-ranged ar-

tillery kept up a slow but steady pace of shells at guerilla positions to provide cover for advancing infantry troops.

Vajpayee's suggestion of safe passage could set a conciliatory tone for the expected visit of Pakistan's foreign minister, Sartaj Aziz, who offered to come to New Delhi to defuse the crisis that has been escalating for weeks between the two nuclear powers.

"This will be considered but only after talks" between the foreign ministers, Vajpayee said in Bombay at the launching of a new battleship. Asked if safe passage would depend on surrender, Vajpayee said: "No, it means withdrawal from our territory."

He said Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh was likely to meet Aziz later this week, but no date has been agreed. Neither side has set conditions for the talks, he said.

Bus service: Calcutta proposes new route

CALCUTTA, Jun 2: The West Bengal government has found the proposed route for the Calcutta-Dhaka bus service to be too congested and has approached the World Bank for a Rs. 750 million loan to prepare an alternative route, reports IANS.

The state government has found the Jessore road, that connects Calcutta and Dhaka, unsuitable for international traffic and is therefore working on an alternative route through the Chakdah road.

According to West Bengal's Public Works Department Minister Kshiti Goswamy, the arterial Jessore road is too congested and narrow for smooth running of the international bus service.

The Indian side of the road, which is about 90 km long, has at least five railway crossings and passes through many markets. This could hamper the speed of the buses, which are expected to complete the 400 km long journey in about 12 hours.

Besides, these buses would also pass through densely populated areas, thereby creating the danger of accidents.

According to the new route, the buses would enter through the Petrapole border, take the Chakdah road and the National Highway 34 to reach Barasat from where they would come to Calcutta. Though this will increase the journey by 14 km, the duration of the journey will not go up as the Chakdah road has relatively low traffic.

Goswamy informed that work had already begun on the expansion of the Chakdah road. The road would be expanded to a width of 18 ft from its present width of 11 ft. Besides, several portions of the total stretch on the Indian side, totalling about 60 km, would be repaired, he said. All this will require Rs 750 million which was being sought from the World Bank.

Earlier, the state government had cleared a substantial portion of the Jessore road, which had been illegally occu-

pied by vendors and pavement squatters, before the trial run of the service on April 6. Since then, many encroachers have returned. The government has so far been silent on the interim arrangements.

"If everything goes according to plans, we expect the regular bus service to commence on June 19 as that is the date suggested by India," a Dhaka report quoted here said.

The fare for a round trip has been fixed at \$22.

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee is expected to make the inaugural trip to mark the second round of his bus diplomacy after the success of the Delhi-Lahore service.

Vajpayee is expected to be welcomed by Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed in Jessore, from where they will fly to Dhaka.

Janakantha gift for cricketers

By Staff Correspondent

Globe Janakantha Shilpa Paribar yesterday announced a reward of Tk 20 lakh for Bangladesh cricketers who shocked former world champions Pakistan on Monday.

Delighted by the historic victory, the Janakantha management also paid one day's gross salary to its journalists and employees.

Of the Tk 20 lakh award, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) will get Tk two lakh for development of cricket in the country. Each member of the World Cup squad will get Tk one lakh while team manager Tanvir Mazhar Islam and team coordinator Dewan Shafiq Arefin will get Tk one lakh each.

Minhajul Abedin and Khaled Mahmud, who won man-of-the-match awards in Bangladesh's games against Scotland and Pakistan respectively, will get an additional Tk 50,000 each.

The prizes would be given soon at a ceremony.

Loneliness

From Page 1

now very much in vogue, we constitute a very small, and even smaller silent minority. But Mishu does make my day every Saturday, as we try to go back in time that is now long gone, almost irrevocably, as it appears.

Memories die hard. To be able to indulge in the odd flight of fancy to keep in fleeting contact with such memories, is one of those small pleasures of life that one is reluctant to give up. Thanks, Mishu. But, you know it too, we are sort of aliens caught in a time warp. Beam us up, Scotty.

Then, what of Tawfiq Aziz Khan? Another of the lost brigade, a man who can spout cricket lore till the cows come home. He too belongs to an age that saw cricket quintessence at its flowering best. He was weaned on Cardus, Robertson, Mason or at worst Fingleton. His avid storehouse of knowledge of cricket history, its players, the grounds they played on and the records they set and broke, do not quite do justice to what is going on around him today. And worse, he has to find something complimentary about them to write about. It is a tough job, but some one has got to do it, I suppose. My sympathies, nevertheless.

Cricket in this World Cup has been, well, different. One maiden bowled over, has been my daughter, who, not surprisingly, given the present state of affairs, thinks the most good-looking players on view are the best ones. My cup of woe almost runneth over.

Greenidge

From Page 1

against the A teams."

Bangladesh are reported to be lining up Pakistan's Javed Miandad to replace Greenidge. Miandad himself was sacked as coach by Pakistan prior to the World Cup.

Greenidge, who is still technically Bangladesh's cricket director, said he might now concentrate on revamping schools cricket in his home country of Barbados.

Golden jubilee

From Page 1

knowledge now in the party's rank and file of the region. The recent arrest of a party lawmaker from Chhatrak, once again, triggered an outburst among the top brass, as they lobbied for and against the decision. Each group have their mentors in the upper echelons of the party.

Immediately after the latest developments in Sylhet, AL cancelled its scheduled golden jubilee rally there, billed for June 19. However, the official version was: It was cancelled because it coincides with the visit of Indian Prime Minister to Bangladesh.

Two weeks ago in Rajshahi, a leader of AL's student front was arrested on charge of ransacking the AL district president's office. Subsequently, he was set free, as he had blessings from other lobbies in the party.

At the same time, the golden jubilee programme of AL in Rajshahi scheduled for June 5 was also cancelled. But the date was later reconfirmed after tension in Rajshahi subsided.

Three top student leaders of AL's student front in Bogra lost their lives in the last five months. They were allegedly killed by party rivals.

Some AL leaders and workers confided that internal feuds were emerging because of 'non-political' causes and not for any ideological difference.

One central AL leader, talking on condition of anonymity, explained it: After AL came to power three years back many youth and student leaders of the party and their cronies started hankering for business contracts from the government.

"Those who got work and made money are happy. Those who did not are disgruntled," he added.

Charges of business tender-related violence and collection of tolls for the AL youth front were discussed at a recent party meeting. However, assurance from their well-wishers in the mother organisation to the effect that the 'boys' would restrain themselves in future, stopped party higher-ups from taking any immediate disciplinary action.

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