

## Two more trains to be placed under private sector

PARBATIPUR, June 30: Bangladesh Railway of western zone has decided to hand over two more train services to the private sector, reports UNB.

These are Up-23 and Down-24 of Uttara Express and Up-31 and Down-32 of Khulna mail on Parbatipur-Rajshahi and Parbatipur-Khulna routes.

A railway source said tenders have been invited in this regard. He hoped that the trains would be run under private management from August.

He said 12 tenders — six from Rajshahi and six from Dhaka — have been received on June 22 which are under scrutiny for selection.

Railway authorities handed over Up-21 and Down-22 Padmarag and Up-481/482 local trains on Santhar-Lalmohar route under private management in April, 1997.

## Hard rock project

### 200 tonnes of stones being extracted daily

State Minister for Energy Prof Rafiqul Islam told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday that on an average 200 tonnes of stones are being extracted daily from the Dinajpur Madhyapara Hard Rock Project, reports BSS.

Replying to a question from Farooq Khan (AL-Gopalganj), he said commercial extraction of rocks has not yet started.

Prof Rafiq said commercial extraction of rocks from the project would begin in July, 2001 at a cost of 10.77 US dollar per tonne while the sale price would be 23 US dollar.

Prof Rafiq said that at present, per tonne of stones is being sold at 17 US dollar as a promotional price.

He also said that at present, 12 square kilometres have been earmarked as the mining area under the project in which the stock of rocks is estimated at 174 million tonnes.

He said a large stock could be extracted from here for more than 70 years.

## Mohila Dal protests police action on women

By Staff Correspondent

Jatitabadi Mohila Dal has strongly protested the incident in which police have assaulted three women at Panchagarh, and urged the people to build a strong resistance against repression of women in the country.

In a joint statement yesterday, central and Dhaka city unit convenors of Mohila Dal Begum Kurshid Jahan Haq MP and Selima Rahman respectively expressed grave concern at such incidents of repression and assault on women.

They alleged that the 'Awami League' terrorists and police were frequently resorting to repression of women across the country.

Referring to the Panchagarh incident, the Mohila Dal leaders said police assaulted nine women in broad daylight at Talma Adarsha Village under sadar thana.

They alleged that currently there is no chain of command and discipline in the police department as the Awami League government was using the police force in the party interests and in harassing leaders and activists of BNP.

## Terrorist

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owner alleged that the members of Azad's gang owed Tk 22 thousand to him as they never paid for taking food in his hotel in the last three months.

A businessman in Kachukhet area said they used to pay huge amount of money as toll to Azad's bandits every month. Many business people had to suffer torture when they failed to pay, he added.

The gang used to collect huge 'donations' from local garment factories owners and forced them to sell 'cut pieces' to the gang members at nominal prices.

Several garments workers were also violated by terrorists of Azad and Jahangir groups, said an elderly man residing at Ibrahimpur.

Another man said any one starting construction work in the area had to pay money to the two gangs. They also forced people to have their construction work done by their men and buy materials from them.

## Obituary

Achia Begum, mother of Abdu Sattar Miaz, the Private Secretary to the State Minister for Jute A K Faezul Haq, died of old-age complications yesterday. She was 73, reports BSS.

She left behind two sons, two daughters and a large number of relatives to mourn his death.

She was buried at her family graveyard.

Qulkhawani of Achia Begum will be held at her Jangalpur village home of Chaudhagram thana under Comilla district on July 2.

Qulkhawani of S J A Akhtar Hussain, retired Superintendent of T and T, will be held at his Mirpur residence after the Maghreb prayers tomorrow, reports BSS.

He died of throat cancer at the age of 78 Monday morning. He was buried in his ancestral home in the village of Gerda in Faridpur.

Family members have requested friends and relations to attend his Qulkhawani to be held at his residence, House No-11, Road 15, Bloc B, Section 10, Mirpur.



Gerardo Manuel Biritos, the newly appointed envoy of Argentina, presented his credentials to President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday.

— PID photo

## 11 get British scholarship

Eleven students have been selected by the British High Commission in Dhaka for scholarships to study in the United Kingdom (UK) in academic year 1999-2000, reports UNB.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair recently announced the start of a worldwide campaign to increase by 75,000 the number of overseas students in the United Kingdom by 2005.

Launching the campaign at The London School of Economics (LSE) in London, Blair also said they would expand their flagship Chevening scholarship scheme by up to 1,000 extra scholarships a year through government and private funding.

The British Chevening Scholarships, funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), are offered in more than 150 countries, including Bangladesh, to enable talented graduates and young professionals to gain skills, which will benefit their countries.

A package of changes has been agreed in Britain to remove delay to international students applying for study in Britain.

## US embassy closed on July 4

The offices of the US Embassy, the Consular Section, the United States Information Service (USIS), USIS Student Counseling Service and USIS Information Resource Centre will be closed on July 4 on the occasion of the American Independence Day, says a press release.

A package of changes has been agreed in Britain to remove delay to international students applying for study in Britain.

## Rotarians plan series of dev programmes

By DU Correspondent

Rotary International has taken up a series of development programmes involving 26 million US dollar to improve the living standard of distressed and downtrodden people of the country.

The programmes include vocational training for unemployed youths, providing safe drinking water, plastic surgery of acid victims, awareness programmes on drug abuse, AIDS and cancer, and providing shelter to the homeless.

M Ozair Farooq, Rotary International District 3280 Governor-elect, disclosed this while addressing a press conference in the city yesterday morning.

Under the literacy programme, Rotary International in collaboration with the government are now running some 425 schools, he said, adding that another programme named 'combat hunger project' is also being implemented.

Rotary, which is now widely regarded as the largest provider of services for human causes, will continue the programmes and take up more projects in the next Rotary 1999-2000 to face the challenge of the 21st century.

The theme of this year's Rotary International is to act with consistency, credibility and continuity.

The rotary district was leading and coordinating the programmes of all the 95 Rotary Clubs of the country.

Farooq said the Rotarians of Bangladesh in the next year

would take a programme with US dollar one lakh for vocational training to 2000 educated, half-educated and illiterate unemployed youths.

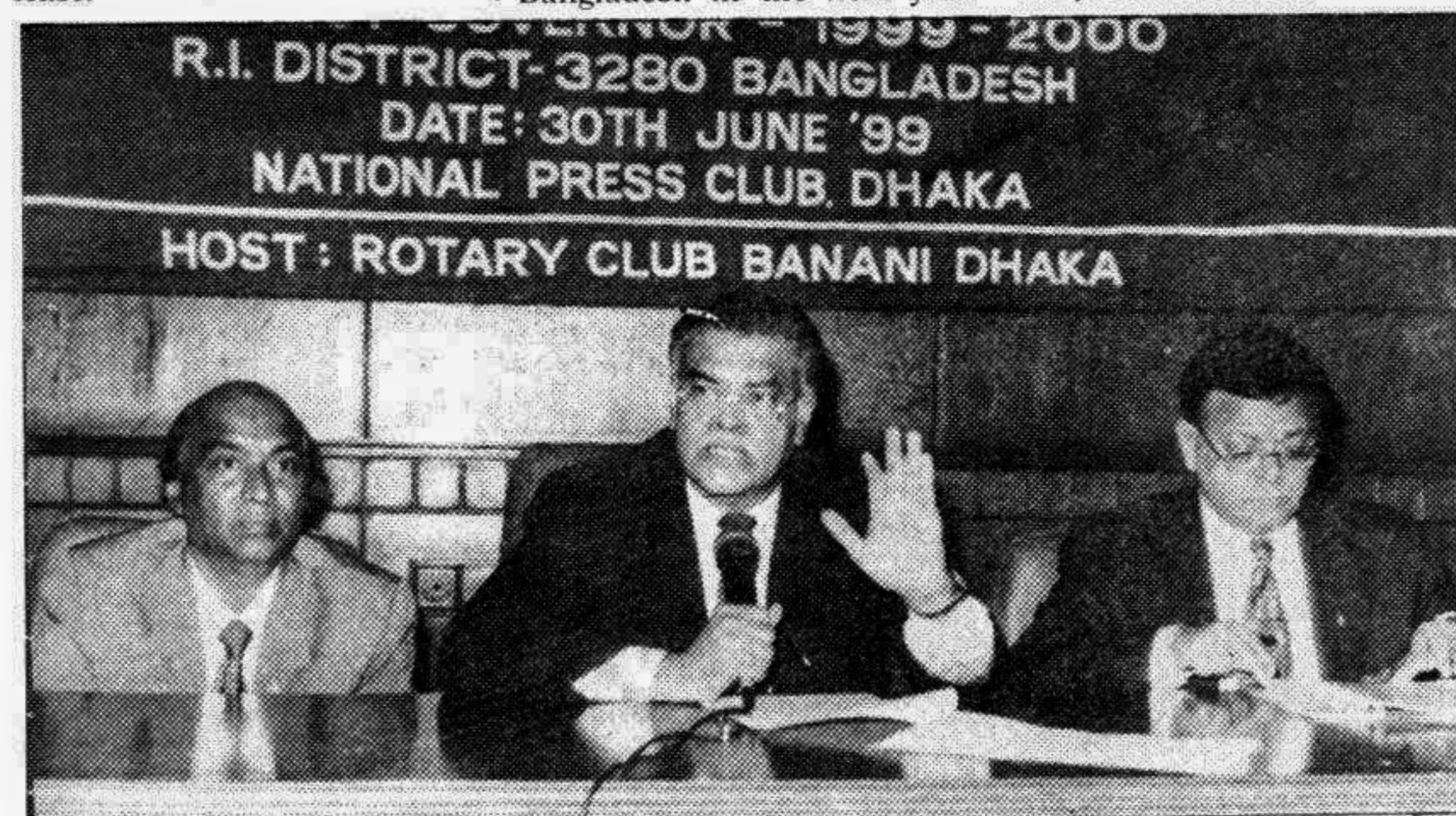
In association with the neighbouring Rotary District in West Bengal of India, the District will organise a Rotary Peace Programme to combat the arsenic problem of the country.

Besides, the District will collect 3999 bags of blood to create awareness of safe blood transfusion and undertake programme to get commitments for posthumous eye donation by at least 367 Rotarians.

The District will also host two international conference of the Rotarians — Rotary International Presidential Conference and Conference of Rotaracts of South Asia namely "ROTASIA" — in Dhaka in April 2000.

Briefing the newsmen on previous activities of the Rotarians, the outgoing District governor MA Awal and the Governor-elect Farooq said that they have organised Eye Camps, undertook different programmes for the farmers and poverty alleviation, established cancer hospital in the city, cyclone shelters in coastal areas and so on for the wellbeing of the distressed humanity.

Among others, Past District Governors Azizul Haque, Iftekharul Alam, Zafar U. Ahmed and Mostafa Zaman Abbasi and President of the Rotary Club of Banani Shah Khasruzzaman were present at the press conference.



M Ozair Farooq, district governor-elect of Rotary International, speaking at a press conference at the National Press Club yesterday. Advocate Shah Khosruzzaman, club president of Banani, and Mohammad-a-Awal, the incumbent governor of the club also spoke on the occasion.

## Money mystery

An amount of Tk one lakh mysteriously disappeared from the Dhaka University branch of Sonali Bank at the University's administrative building yesterday, bank officials said, reports UNB.

They said three employees of the office of the Examination Controller drew Tk 3.48 lakh on account of salaries of its staff in the morning.

The employees told the bank officials and university authorities that they put Tk one lakh in a leather bag and found the bag empty when they opened it to put the remaining money in it.

The university authorities formed a three-member inquiry committee headed by the Examination Controller.

## RU reopens today

RAJSHAHI, June 30: The classes of Rajshahi University (RU) resumes tomorrow after 39 days of summer vacation, reports UNB.

## Workshop on gas development issues ends

A reporters' workshop on Gas Development Issues ended yesterday in the city, says a press release.

Eleven journalists from leading newspapers of the country took part in the workshop organised by Bangladesh Centre for Development, Journalism and Communication (BCDJC) and the Knight International Press Fellowship Programme of the International Centre for Journalists (ICFJ) Washington DC.

Six specialists in gas exploration briefed the journalists on the latest developments in the sector.

## Anti-terrorist drive in Khulna

255 outlaws surrender

KHULNA, June 30: Some 255 outlaws have surrendered to police with 157 firearms in 9 thanas of the district since launching of the anti-terrorist special drive, reports UNB.

Giving the figures, Police Super Ataul Gani Badsha told UNB on Tuesday that a good number of armed extremists were expected to surrender at the local Circuit House on July 2.

Home Minister Mohammad Nasim is scheduled to attend the surrender ceremony. The police have already made all necessary preparations in this regard, said the SP.

He said they received a good response from the terrorists as they wanted to give up their underground activities and return to normal life.

Meanwhile, 54 outlaws surrendered to police with 38 firearms in three thanas of the district on Sunday and Monday.

In Rupsa thana, 10 extremists



Participants of the reporters workshop on 'Gas Development Issues' organised by BCDJC and ICFJ.

## Home Minister

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Nasim asked the opposition to stop what he called its double standard.

Declaring his firm commitment to take action against anybody involved in terrorism or nursing terrorists, he said: "None is above law. And none will be allowed to go above law."

Referring to former Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali's ruling that hands of law are long no doubt, but they are not too long to reach parliament, the home minister said terrorists are getting bails immediately after they are arrested.

Criticising opposition MPs' cry for independent judiciary, he said, "We did not forget the day when a High Court judge read out a judgement sitting by the side of a Chhatra Dal leader."

"Those who protected the killers by amending the Constitution and extended state facility to them do not have the moral position to talk about us," he said.

"If I work neutrally and make the constitution effective, I will have to take action against those who protected the killers of Bangabandhu," he said.

Earlier, moving cut motions, opposition members said police force itself is corrupt and involved in criminal activities. Jaifur Islam howsoever of BNP said there is no need for making allocation for police who cannot protect people. "Rather, they kill people in custody."

Mehdi Ahmed Rumi of BNP held the police responsible for deterioration of law and order situation. Zainal Abedin Farooq of BNP said it was the police who stripped off Moni Begum.

Shamsul Alam Pramanik said corruption is the main problem of police. Ehsanul Haq Milon said Home Ministry has been used in attacking opposition members.

Md Shahjahan said: "We can't give money to let people die in police custody and jails."

Among others who took part in discussion were Shahidul Islam, Prof Shahidul Islam, Shamsuzzaman Dudu, Alamgir Haider Khan, Fazul Azim and Md. Mohammad Shahjahan of BNP and Golam Farooq Ovee of JP.

## JS tidbits

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ride to Khulna on July 2. You first have to examine if the recovered firearms are operative, inoperative or rusted," said the minister.

During discussion on grants for the home ministry, other BNP lawmakers also passed interesting comments, much of the embarrassment to the minister concerned, who did not mince any word to retort to some charges.

Md Ehsanul Haq Milon asked Nasim who was the home minister for Kachua — the area in Chandpur from where he is elected. Is it Nasim or Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir (the statement minister for planning, who hails from the same area)? Milon's funny question followed his allegation that the state minister had set the police after him.

"There is only one home minister in Bangladesh and he is Mohammad Nasim. The home ministry does not carry out the orders of anybody else, other than the prime minister and myself," Nasim said, claiming that there were ten home ministers during the BNP days.

Khairul Enam ridiculed the home minister for his earlier announcement that he would find out the terrorists from the beneath the soil. "Terrorists don't stay under the soil, they're very on it. Catch those on the soil first, then you can go beneath."

Shahidul Islam discovered two police stations in his Jhenaidah constituency. "One is the official and there is another unofficial which is run by ruling party people. We are using the police stations as a position of power to challenge the Treasury to disprove him."

GM Fazul Haq termed the 'dog squad' as Kutia (dog) police, which he said had to be imported due to failure of the police in maintaining law and order in the country.

Responding to the BNP outrage against Tuesday's killing around the court premises, the home minister remarked, "We'll have to investigate if the murder was preplanned as the incident took place the day before today's scheduled discussion on the home ministry."

In response to the opposition lawmakers' harsh comments about the police, a witty Nasim said, "How can I save you from the wrath of policemen when you provoke them all the time. Naturally, they're angry about your comments."

## Salaudin, Mohsin elected BPJA President, GS

By DU Correspondent

Mohammad Salaudin and A K M Mohsin have been elected the president and general secretary of Bangladesh Photo Journalists Association (BPJA) respectively.

This is for the third time that Salaudin and Mohsin have been elected BPJA top executives.

The biennial election of the 12-member executive body of BPJA was held at the office of the association yesterday.

Other executives of the association are Shafiuddin Ahmed Pintu (vice-president), Abdur Razzak (vice-president), Kazi Borhan Uddin (joint-secretary), Ataur Rahman Babu (joint-secretary), M Sanaul Haq (treasurer), Shahadat Ali (office secretary) and members Rafiqur Rahman, Wasey Ansari, Mahbub Hossain Khan Nabin and M Shahidul Islam Sikder.

## World Bank to help contain spread of AIDS

By Staff Correspondent

It was a big surprise for some of the street sex workers of the city. World Bank's South Asia Vice President, Miekio Nishimizu, came to visit the girls at a drop-in centre in the old part of the city yesterday.

"I can't imagine that a woman holding a post in world body could visit us from abroad, as even our prime minister, who is also a woman, never came to see us despite living in the same city," said Rahela (not real name), a street sex worker.

Miekio Nishimizu, the visiting World Bank's South-Asia Vice-President yesterday went to one of the eight drop-in centres for street sex workers run by CARE, Bangladesh.

These centres are resting places for the street-based sex workers who are very poor and do not have a proper home. After working through the nights they need some rest and care," said Monica Beg, project coordinator of CARE.

World Bank will offer assistance to Bangladesh to help contain the spread of Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) among sex workers and drug users, a bank official said.

The World Bank has completed a fact-finding mission on this and will place a proposal for aid to the bank's headquarters in Washington soon," Subrata S. Dhar, World Bank's external affairs officer, told reporters.

"Bangladesh still has the chance to prevent the epidemic of AIDS because the country so far has only 100 known cases of

AIDS," said Miekio Nishimizu while talking to the sex workers.

She said: "Bangladesh is yet to suffer the onslaught of the diseases, but commercial sex, injecting drugs, international migration and mobility tend to make Bangladesh vulnerable to it."

She praised the non-governmental organisations (NGO) in creating awareness among sex workers and drug addicts against HIV and AIDS.

Sex workers told Nishimizu their sad stories and about how they are often harassed by police and mastans.

Nishimizu assured them her all assistance and said, "I shall convey your sufferings to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during my meeting on July 4."

The CARE also operates six needle exchange centres, providing syringes and needles to addicts. Nishimizu also visited to one such needle exchange centre.

"We are trying to stop transmission of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases by discouraging use of used needles," said another CARE official Nizamuddin Ahmed.

Drug users normally collect used needles from hospital waste-bins and reuse them for injecting drugs to one or more addicts, they said.

World Bank Country Director Frederick P. Temple, CARE, Bangladesh Sector Co-ordinator Carol Jenkins were, among others, who accompanied the World Bank Vice-President during her trip to the centres.

## Tk 105 cr Barisal municipality budget

### No fresh tax imposed

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, June 30: Barisal municipality announced a budget of Tk 105.56 crore for the fiscal 1999-2000 here today.

Md Ahsan Habib Kamal, Chairman of the Barisal Municipality, announced the budget at the 'Poua Bhaban' in presence of journalists, elected pourasabha Commissioner and the elites of the town this evening.

Of the total amount, Tk 12,30,35,765 has been earmarked for revenue expenditure and Tk 87,15,00,000 for development expenditure.

The municipality chairman also announced the revised budget of Tk 20,37,70,584 of 1998-'99 fiscal that ended today.

"No fresh tax has been imposed in the new budget," said chairman Md Ahsan Habib Kamal in his speech, "rather the budget aims at increasing the civic facilities for the Barisal town dwellers."

In the proposed budget, de-

velopment and revenue earnings have been shown as Tk 37,15,00,000 and Tk 13,62,05,221 respectively with a government grant of Tk 1 cr for the development sector.

The development sector projects include construction of a modern children's park, two botanical gardens, a modern fountain in Bibur Park in the town, a community centre and a rest house, a centrally air-conditioned multi-storied commercial complex and a DPHE-assisted water supply and water treatment plant.

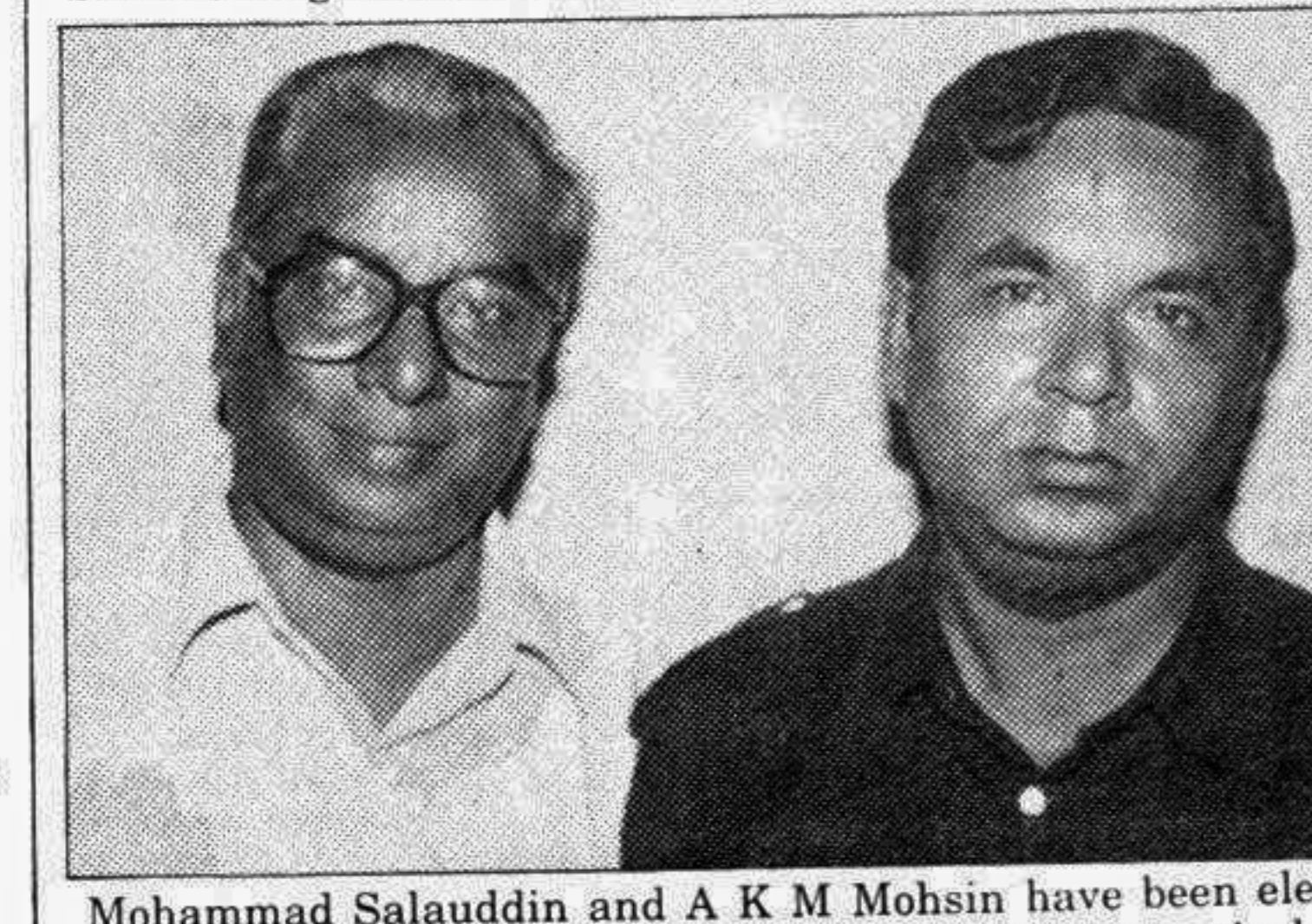
Meanwhile, under the Infrastructure Development Project-2 involving Tk 20 cr with financial assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), construction work on some roads, drains and excavation of canals have already been implemented in the town. The remaining work under this project is expected to be completed by 2001.



American Express Bank has moved with the UNDP to its new offices at IDB Bhaban in Agargaon yesterday. Nay Htun, UN Assistant Secretary General and UNDP Assistant Administrator, Regional Director for Asia and Pacific, formally opened the Bank's office as the Guest of Honor as seen in the above picture. David Lockwood, Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme in Bangladesh was also present as special guest.



Md Abdul Halim, Additional Secretary (Inputs), Ministry of Agriculture was the chief guest at the launching ceremony of the higher capacity Urea Mega Granula Machine designed and manufactured by STMB (Bangladesh) Limited. He formally turned on the switch of the UMG machine. Dr Ronald P Black, Chief of Party, ATDP, IFDC and Sheikh Azimuddin, Managing Director, SIMB (Bangladesh) Limited are also seen in the picture.



Mohammad Salaudin and A K M Mohsin have been elected president and general secretary of BPJA respectively.

## Akhtaruzzaman

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high command is freed from the 'influences of anti-liberation and fundamentalist forces', the party is sure to suffer politically in the near future.

In an exclusive interview with Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS), Akhtaruzzaman termed his suspension from the party as a 'shear undemocratic act' and also the 'results of the conspiracies' of the so-called hard-liners. He remarked the BNP had been failing politically in the recent past mainly due to such egotistical, 'deceptive' and 'rash' political actions promoted by the 'mischievous coterie'.

In this context, he defended his criticism against hartal, saying that democracy is in practice, parliament is functioning, so there is no need for hartal, which is a desperate political weapon.

Explaining the background of BNP's formation by late President Gen Ziaur Rahman, Akhtaruzzaman opined that the party which is now 'under the firm grip of reactionaries' has to be freed as early as possible in the interest of saving it (BNP) from a major debacle.

In this context, he alleged that a coterie was inflicting a heavy blow to BNP's image by adopting unpragmatic and undemocratic decisions. This section, he alleged, has successfully overpowered the party chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia. "But I tell you, this is not at all a good sign," he asserted.

The outspoken opposition lawmaker remarked that the anti-liberation and reactionary forces in the BNP had created such an intolerable situation that "BNP now means Khaleda Zia and Khaleda Zia means BNP now," which is not a healthy sign.

Akhtaruzzaman, a soldier-turned politician, said the hard-liners, through imposing, their intolerant, undemocratic, and rash decisions, have already subdued BNP's role as the largest democratic opposition.

"Once the whole country would listen to BNP and now it is difficult for the party to play successful role as a responsible opposition," he remarked.

Replying to the question on party decision, he said, "I never went against my party decisions, but I will always speak against undemocratic and unlawful acts." On question what he would do if he is not given party nomination in the next polls, Akhtaruzzaman said, "If the party nominates me than I shall take part in the election".

He also spoke strongly about changing party colour by a section of politicians and firmly said that time would say what BNP could do through their so-called anti-government programmes to oust the party in power during my suspension period of next one-year. "I am a free man now, at least for next one year, and will certainly watch how the hard-liners work."

Responding to a question on identifying 'conspirators' inside the BNP, Akhtaruzzaman said, it will be unnecessary to make them important by naming them... you know all who are the 'conspirators'. I hope those pro-democratic and pro-liberation forces in the party are now subdued would come out one day and restore the party's image.

Clarifying some of his party's intolerant and rash actions, Akhtaruzzaman said the 'conspirators' once provoked party leader to speak imaginary issues such as, 'if Awami League comes to power than we shall not be able to listen to Azan'. "Chittagong Hill Tracts would be a part of India if CHT treaty is signed", etc. Ultimately what happened? Awami League came to power but neither 'Azan' was stopped nor was CHT taken over by India.

Akhtaruzzaman who identified himself as an independent MP also criticised the ruling party for what he alleged its claim as the sole credit holder of the country's Liberation War. He said, anti-liberation and reactionary forces in the BNP have got the opportunity to have us cornered up as Awami League do not admit that there are also freedom fighters in BNP."

Thanking the Speaker for giving him the floor in parliament while he was not given time by his own party, he said, by sanctioning me time the Speaker has shown his real sagacity and utmost sincerity to make parliament more effective. "My party, BNP, has shown utter meanness by not allowing me to speak in parliament and to gag my independent voice, which is not fair," he lamented.

The retired Major also questioned wisdom of his party founder late president General Ziaur Rahman to make General Ershad an army chief, alleging that it was during Ershad's tenure that anti-liberation and reactionary forces were rehabilitated under a blue-print. But he defended the policies of Gen Ziaur Rahman who inducted anti-liberation forces in politics, arguing it was done for a national consensus.

The suspended BNP lawmaker also said that former President Justice Sattar was not in favour of anything prohibition.

## Tanneries will be shifted, JS told

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed yesterday told the Jatiya Sangsad that the