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Opposition calls hartal on July 8

The BNP-led opposition alliance yesterday called a countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal on July 8 to protest passage of an 'anti-people' budget ignoring their objections, reports UNB.

The allied parties staged demonstrations in the capital yesterday and announced a series of agitation programmes.

As part of agitation programme, BNP will hold a public rally at Paltan Maidan in the city on July 5. Party Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia will address the rally in the afternoon.

Jamaat-e-Islami will hold a public meeting at Paltan Maidan on July 4 while Jatiya Party at Brahmanbaria on July 3.

Islami Oikya Jote did not convene any public meeting before the hartal.

BNP also asked its district and thana units to hold rallies on July 5 and 6 respectively. The party will also bring out a torch procession across the country before the hartal.

During demonstration yesterday, the BNP held a rally at Muktangan in the city protesting 'personal attack' on its chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia and her family members and 'false' remarks against deputy leader of the opposition Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury in the Jatiya Sangsad.

The BNP activists burnt an effigy of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in presence of the party leaders at the meeting venue.

Flood situation deteriorates in three districts

Flood situation in three districts has deteriorated further due to incessant rain and onrush of waters from across the border, reports UNB.

The affected districts are Sunamganj, Lalmonirhat and Kurigram.

In Sunamganj, a vast area in Bishombhorpur and Sadar thanas of the district inundated following collapse of two embankments.

Official sources said a portion of Jinarpur embankment in Bishombhorpur thana and another portion of Daluna embankment in Sadar thana collapsed yesterday deteriorating the overall flood situation in the district.

Some 40 villages of the two thanas have been inundated due to the breaches in the embankments.

Local Water Development Board sources said the Surma was flowing 43cm above its danger mark at Sunamganj point at 3 pm.

The MET office recorded 160mm rainfall yesterday.

Flood situation in Kurigram district has deteriorated further inundating low-lying areas of 40 unions due to incessant rain and onrush of waters from across the border.

Water levels in the rivers of Brahmaputra, Teesta, Dharla and Dudkumar are swelling fast.

Erosion by the rivers Brahmaputra and Sonavari devoured 16 villages in three unions of Rajibpur thana.

Some 6,000 people of about 1,200 families have become homeless due to the continuous erosion by the river Brahmaputra, Dharla and Sonavari.

In Lalmonirhat, the low-lying areas of 16 villages of Hatinga and Sonavari unions are inundated.

A Summer to Remember

Some things are worth waiting for. The Daily Star Summer Fashion '99 is about to hit the stands. Don't miss this exciting catalogue of the latest summer wear for men and women along with the prices of outfits as well as the names and addresses of the boutiques. 48 pages in full colour featuring the outfits and fashion tips to help you beat the heat with flair and style. This special publication will come out next week.

Book your copy now!

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Punish the poachers

Tigers at risk in the Sundarbans

By Shehab Ahmed

The Royal Bengal Tiger, surviving centuries of hunting, is finding it difficult to escape poachers in their last sanctuary — the Sundarbans — where at least 12 tigers were killed over the last one decade, officials and experts say.

But the actual casualties, most remaining unreported, are said to be more, posing a serious threat to the majestic animal. Some 360 are surviving there, protected by the Wildlife Protection Act.

Tiger skin and bones are sought increasingly by greedy poachers backed by powerful quarters to feed a thriving market in the Far East, where bones fetch more money than skin. Tiger bones are prized as aphrodisiacs and balms in the Far East.

Bangladesh Rifles personnel

killed a tiger on the fringe of the Sundarbans in 1997, but they returned the skin to the Forest Department when pressed. The bones were never returned.

Forest Department sources said the latest killing was reported early last month when poachers were busy retrieving the skin of a male tiger after shooting it down at Devnagar under Shyamnagar thana of Satkhira district. The poachers failed to hide their misdeed when local people gathered to have a look at the slain tiger.

On information from some of them, Forest Department authorities sought police help that resulted in the filing of a case and seizure of the skin.

The killing involved a powerful local politician who tried to suppress the facts. The case was filed more than a week after the mischief, following pressure from the higher authorities in Dhaka.

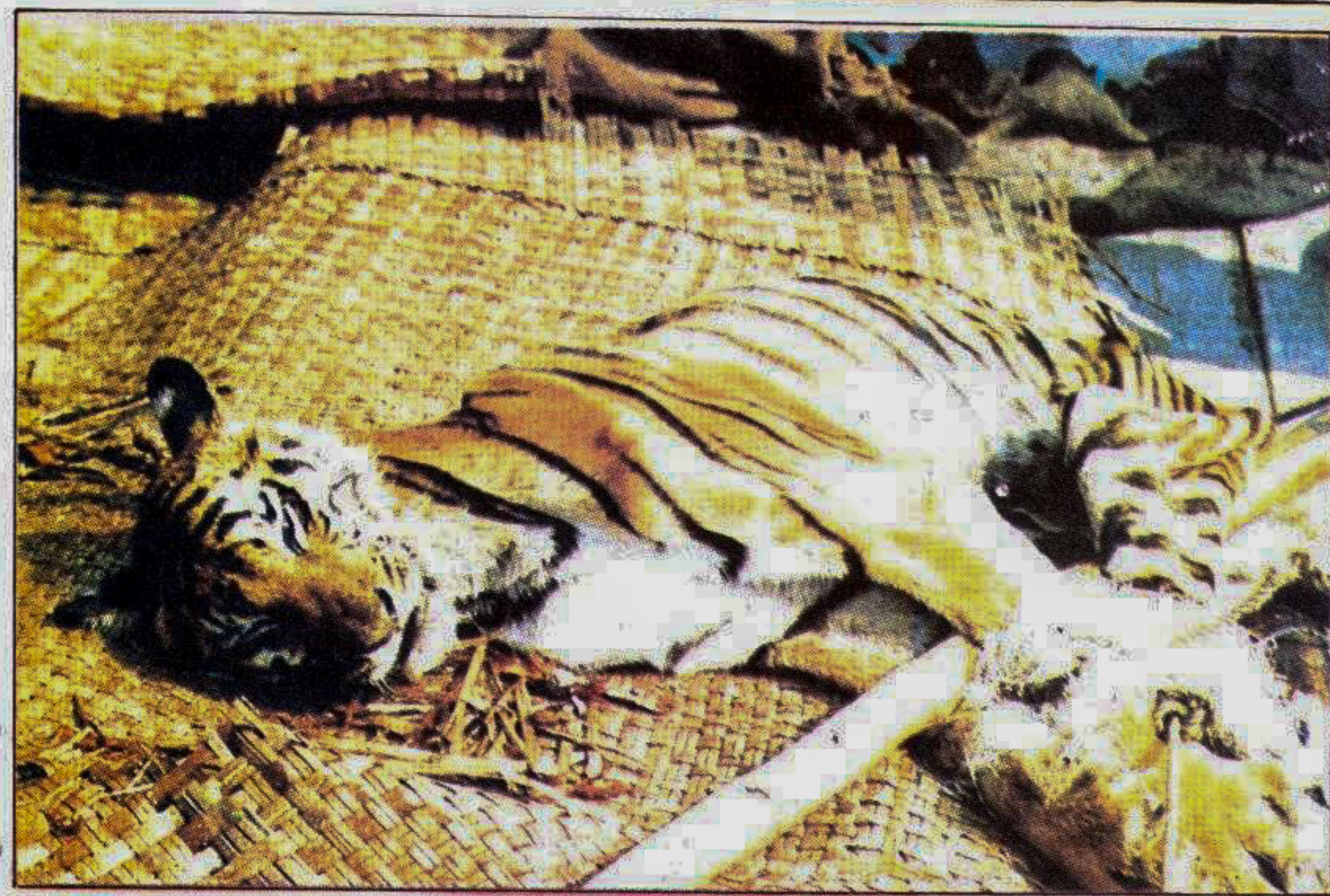
The politician who has shrimp farm said that the tiger had intruded into his farm and he had to shoot it. This, however, was considered an excuse to escape punishment of two years in prison and fines for such an offence.

Earlier, he said some people had 'accidentally' killed the tiger in the protected forest — recently declared as the World Heritage site by the UNESCO — while hunting deer, which is also prohibited.

But he later changed his version and police recorded a case for killing a tiger under the Wildlife Protection Act.

After the killing of that tiger, the first reported this year, the first reported this

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An ailing Royal Bengal Tiger is being taken away from the Sundarbans for treatment.

— NACOM photo

B. Chowdhury denies allegation

Fresh debate, walkout

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday witnessed a renewed debate on the alleged 'defamatory' speech of Deputy Leader of the Opposition Prof. AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury resulting in a walkout by the BNP, reports BSS.

The opposition staged a walkout when Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed got the floor amid opposition protests after Dr. Chowdhury gave a statement to clarify his position on the issue on Rule 274 of the Rules of Procedure.

Prof. Chowdhury denied the allegation that he had made any 'disrespectful' remark on the Prophet (SM) by comparing BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia's academic background with his and demanded withdrawal of

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's 'false' allegations accusing him of defaming the Prophet (SM).

'I will have no complaint if she withdraws her false allegation. Otherwise, she will be responsible for it on the day of resurrection,' he said.

Prof. Chowdhury accused the ruling party of 'exploiting' the religious sentiment of the people and using it against him.

The BNP leader said he had never compared Begum Zia's academic background with the Prophet's (SM) saying despite being an 'unnamed' unlettered, he was the most learned and greatest man of all times.

'I am a practising Muslim and try to follow the Islamic code of conduct,' he added.

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400 more outlaws surrender in Khulna today

From Staff Correspondent
KHULNA, July 1: Four hundred outlaws from Khulna, Bagerhat and Satkhira districts will surrender with arms and ammunition to Home Minister Mohammad Nasim at the circuit house maidan here tomorrow.

The sub-jail at the Jorhagate has been renovated to accommodate the surrendered outlaws who belong to Biplobi Communist Party and Purbo Banglar Communist Party.

Police Superintendent of Khulna said today a total of 300 outlaws have surrendered from nine thanas of the district till June 30.

They have deposited 200 firearms with police, he added.

Besides, a good number of pirates from the Sundarbans will also surrender to the Home Minister.

The sub-jail where the outlaws will be housed has been kept under armed police guard.

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Khaleda's 'no' to Ashoke Leyland lorries for army

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia protested the purchase of 'sub-standard' Indian Ashoke Leyland lorries for Bangladesh Army and Russian Mig 29 fighter jets for the Air Force, reports UNB.

Ashoke Leyland is a non-artillery motor vehicle that is 'unfit' for use as artillery vehicle. 'India itself does not use this substandard vehicle for its army,' she said in a statement yesterday.

Terming these defence purchases unprecedented, the former prime minister said the issue is completely linked to the security of the country as well as defence policy and management.

She said Bangladesh had long tradition in using military vehicles made by Germany, France and Sweden which are long-proven and approved by 'cross-country test and trial.'

But the government has de-

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4 bills seeking extension of time for city corps polls placed

Nine amendment bills were introduced in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday, reports UNB.

Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) Minister Zillur Rahman introduced four separate bills seeking additional 90 days' time to conduct elections in four city corporations of the country.

The opposition MPs opposed all the four bills arguing that these bills would prevent their participation in the polls through consensus.

The four bills are: The Dhaka City Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 1999; The Chittagong City Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 1999; The Rajshahi City Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 1999 and The Khulna City Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 1999 and The Khulna City Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 1999.

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Stop this Dangerous Game

By Mahfuz Anam

Last Wednesday evening Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury promised the deputy leader of the opposition time for a personal explanation after the budget was approved. When that time came, and after Dr. Badruddoza Chowdhury was already given the floor, the Speaker changed his decision and denied him the chance to speak on the insistence of the leader of the House, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

We have decided to comment on the incident for two reasons.

First, we think for the Speaker to reverse his decision under insistence of the PM, was wrong. It has severely damaged the image of the Speaker who, not particularly known for his independent position vis-a-vis the ruling party, looked almost to be at the beck and call of the PM, much to the disappointment of the democracy loving people of Bangladesh. The

Speaker, knowing that he stood on solid ground, tried to justify his decision. And yet he succumbed to PM's pressure and, looking visibly embarrassed, ate his own words and requested Dr. Chowdhury to speak the following day. Not only that, he then adjourned the House, again at what looked almost like a 'directive' from Sheikh Hasina.

Speaker's failure to hold his ground was a sad spectacle of a creeping stranglehold of the ruling party on the independent functioning of our parliament. It will no doubt add further justification to the rising scepticism among the opposition members as to the usefulness of participating in our parliamentary proceedings. Those who have always suspected the Speaker not to be impartial will now have another reason to justify their position, and may we add justifiably so. His action

was a denigration of the high office he adorns.

According to our parliamentary rules the Speaker enjoys enormous discretionary powers which generously entitled him to allow the deputy opposition leader to continue to speak last Wednesday. In fact the Speaker did not need to be that discretionary. As the deputy leader of the opposition Dr. Chowdhury enjoys the rights to speak regularly. In addition, in the absence of the leader of the opposition (which is regrettable is quite often), he was wearing two hats, which entitled him even more to speak that evening. To add further, the so-called 'norm' that the PM used as a justification for her vehement objection to Dr. Chowdhury speaking, (that no personal explanation be allowed on the day the budget was to be passed) was in effect observed because the Speaker

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Sex worker strangled at Tanbazar

From Our Correspondent
NARAYANGANJ, July 1: A sex worker was strangled by an unidentified miscreant at Tanbazar brothel in the town in the early hours of today.

The dead was identified as Jesmin, 22, hailing from Swarupkathi in Barisal district.

Narayanganj police went to the spot at about 11 am and found Jesmin lying in a pool of blood on the second floor of the Daulatkhon Bhaban.

Jesmin was throttled and stabbed by the miscreant, police said.

Police also recovered a sharp blade and a boti from the victim's room.

The body was sent to Narayanganj General Hospital for autopsy.

Babul, a security guard of the

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Inmates of Tanbazar Brothel staged a demonstration in Narayanganj town yesterday protesting murder of a fellow inmate inside the brothel.

—Star photo

Only three policemen patrol court complex

By Raziur Rahman

Only a three-member police patrol from Kotwali thana is engaged in maintaining security on the court building premises in the old city where at least 20 thousand people gather every day for litigation purposes.

The Courts of District and Sessions Judge, Metropolitan Sessions Judge, Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Additional District Magistrate, Special Courts and Artha Rin Adalat and offices of the DC and the SP of Dhaka and some other senior officials are situated in the court building and its premises.

Ataur Rahman Azad, who was leaving the court area after appearing in the District Judge's Court in a case under the Explosives Act, was gunned down on Tuesday.

The Officer-in-Charge of Kotwali thana said that the killing of Azad outside the court building was an isolated incident. 'Untoward incidents outside the court building are not happening every day.'

However, Tuesday's incident and other killings near the

court premises speak of inadequate police patrol or security. According to the OC, only three policemen from his thana patrol the court premises.

Earlier on September 25, 1995, Abu Morshed, a JCD activist and an accused in a murder case, was shot by some assailants at the entrance of Dhaka Bar Association office in broad day light.

In another incident, Tinku, an accused in a case filed with Gulshan thana, was chased and shot by gunmen when he came to appear before a court on February 20, 1993.

Besides, incidents like clash between rival sides in a case often occur in the court area. On June 22, at least five people were injured as two groups clashed on the veranda of CM-M's Court.

A Metropolitan Magistrate preferring anonymity told The Daily Star that the security arrangement on and outside the court premises is not satisfactory. He suggested that plainclothes policemen and vigilance team should be deployed in the

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Mugging at city centre

By Staff Correspondent

Muggers snatched Tk 1.5 lakh from a pedestrian near the north gate of Baitul Mukarram Mosque yesterday morning.

The victim, Alauddin Biswas, son of Khorshed Ali Biswas of Jurain under Shyampur thana, filed an FIR with Motijheel thana in this connection.

Motijheel police quoting the FIR said that Alauddin was going to Janata Bank at Abdul Ghani Road in an auto-rickshaw from Bangladesh Bank to deposit his money with the bank.

He left the auto-rickshaw in front of the north gate of Baitul Mukarram Mosque at about 11 am to avoid traffic jam, police added.

When he reached near the over bridge, a young man pushed him down and three others snatched the money from his pocket at gun point, police said.

Witnesses said Alauddin cried for help but nobody came to his aid. The gang left the place brandishing arms.

Nona was arrested in this connection filing of this report last night.

Election Commission Secretariat

Voters' ID Cards Project
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka

No-ECS/ID/Pubcity/13/98/Part/759

Dated: 10 Ashar, 1406/24 June, 1999

Subject: Voters' ID Cards Preparing, Collection and Preservation

The Bangladesh Election Commission has been bestowed with the responsibility of giving identity cards to all the voters of the country under electoral law. The 2nd phase of activities of preparing voters' identity card has been started again from the last week of the month of November of the year '98 and which will be completed during the duration of the project by June, 1999. It is mentionable that the first phase of activities of preparation and distribution of voters' identity cards was in effect from 1995 to June, 1996. Voters whose photographs have not been taken earlier for voters' identity cards are requested to take photographs in the camps set up in their respective unions/pourasabhas/poura corporations/villages/mohallas and wards. All the valued voters are requested to know the timetable of their respective areas. Moreover, the Thana Election Officers/Assistant Registration Officers have made necessary arrangements to inform about the location of camp at your area and timetable through notification, mikes, proclamation by beat of drums, handbill, posters and leaflets. Five-day camps are being set up in each voters area for taking photographs. The concerned District Election Officer has made arrangements for publicity of location of camps and timetable through newspapers, radio and TV in those areas where there is scope for all these. Apart from this five-day camps the vendors in the thana sadar of the constituency have made arrangements for setting up a permanent camp for taking photographs so that those who have dropped from taking photographs can avail themselves of the opportunity of taking photographs again.

It is not that a voter identity card will be used only for casting votes. Moreover, it will be used for 14 more purposes like 1) Handover of movable property 2) Mutation and exclusion of name 3) Land settlement among landless 4) Compensation for land acquisition 5) Marriage registration 6) In case of collecting different licences and permits (firearms, driving, various trades, contractorship, radio, television etc) 7) Getting passport 8) In the case of issuing boarding pass (specially inside the country for the sake of security) during travel by air 9) In the case of taking loan from bank/money-lending organisation or transaction 10) VGF/VGD 11) Getting all kinds of relief 12) For identifying the accused, witness and plaintiff in the cases in the court 13) Interviews for job and 14) For taking any sort of benefit from government. It will be used as a helpful document for identification. So a voter identity card has a much importance.

It is the responsibility of the valued voters to take photographs in the camps set up at village/mahalla/wards and also to encourage others to do so. To collect the voters' identity cards and to preserve it is also the responsibility of valued voters. With this end in view the valued voters are requested to take photographs in camps of their respective villages/mahalla/wards of their unions/pourasabhas/poura corporation. Know the timetable for taking photographs of your area from the offices of pourasabhas/union parishads chairmen/ward commissioner/members and Assistant Registration Officer, Thana Election Officer or District Election Officer.

The programme of distribution of prepared voters' identity cards is being conducted by the teachers of government/registered primary schools. If you did not change the address in which you were/became a voter in '95 or afterwards and if your photograph was taken for the identity cards, then the Assistant Registration Officer, Thana Election Officer or District Election Officer will make arrangements for giving your identity cards and taking photographs or acceptance when you contact them provided you change your address later and if your photographs are not taken. It is mentionable that the size of the photo is 30mmX24mm and it will be of one type either black and white or colour for any constituency. Each voter is requested to preserve the identity card properly after one gets it. If there is any mistake regarding your father's/husband's name and address or any wrong information or if there is any error in photograph, then immediately contact the Assistant Registration Officer of your area, Thana Election Officer or District Election Officer for correction or replacement. These officers will make arrangements for corrections or mistake and error and replacement with a correct identity cards, if necessary.

People's representatives, political activists, representatives of local government, teachers, journalists, representatives of club and voluntary organisations, head of educational institutions, head of religious organisations, social worker, NGOs, all the departments of the government as well as the honourable citizens of all walks of life are earnestly requested to extend their kind cooperation in the task of preparing and distribution of voters' identity cards.

Md Helal Uddin Khan

Additional Secretary and Project Director
Voters' ID Card Project

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