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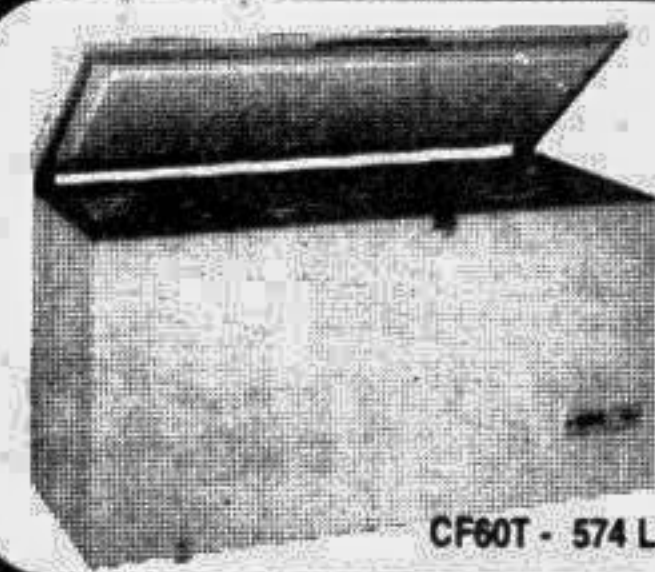
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President praises PGR

President Shahabuddin Ahmed has asked the members of the President's Guard Regiment (PGR) to be more single-minded in performing their duties properly, reports UNB.

Above all, "they will always have to be imbued with patriotism," he said addressing a function, organised on the occasion of the 24th founding anniversary of the President's Guard Regiment, at the Dhaka Cantonment yesterday.

President Shahabuddin said devotion, dutifulness, discipline and professional skill of the members of the Regiment have earned praise from all quarters and they should have to be more conscious in future in maintaining the hard earned acclamation.

Addressing the function, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the government would take all necessary steps, whenever needed, for further modernising and strengthening the armed forces.

"Armed forces is our national asset and the symbol of unity and sovereignty... we are determined to take all steps for its development and welfare," she said.

Hasina said her government had taken the most effective steps for the development and strengthening of the armed forces in comparison to any other governments.

Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Mustafizur Rahman also addressed the function, attended by the members of the regiment and PGR Commandant Col Mohammad Hossain Sadeque.

Rubel murder

Proceedings of case adjourned till July 18

By Staff Correspondent

The Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions' Judge Court adjourned the proceedings of Rubel murder case yesterday till July 18 following a time prayer by the prosecution. Yesterday was the day for cross-examination of Abdur Rob, Rubel's father who is also the informant of the case. The prosecution filed the time petition saying that Rubel's father could not appear before the court as he was sick and Judge Molla Mustafa Kamal fixed July 18 for the cross-examination.

Dhaka's call

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international community which was telling that the two should resolve the problem through discussions and dialogues.

Describing the ongoing fighting over Kashmir as "unfortunate," the Foreign Minister said the international community, being worried about the possible consequences, urged the two nations to stop the exchange of fire. The danger have further been accentuated because both India and Pakistan have become nuclear powers.

Azad, who refuted opposition charge that the foreign policy is subservient to India, said they (BNP) did not try to solve water problem with that country and thereby turned Bangladesh into a desert.

He said their (BNP's) foreign policy was not only subservient, but also had a mindset which obstructed resolution of problem and keeping those alive. Bangladesh was not benefited by taking its case to the UN and other fora, a policy practised by BNP.

Flood situation in six dists worsens further

By Staff Correspondent

Flood situation in six districts — Gaibandha, Kurigram, Rangpur, Sirajganj, Kushtia and Jamalpur — has deteriorated further due to incessant rain and onrush of hill waters from across the border.

Of the affected districts, the situation took a serious turn in Gaibandha. Some 100 riverside localities in the district have been inundated as rivers swelled further with rain and rolling waters from upper riparian, leaving at least 20,000 people marooned.

Our Correspondent from

Boro procurement target refixed

The cabinet yesterday approved the proposal for refixation of internal boro procurement target at six lakh metric tons and wheat at 2,80-3,00 lakh metric tons to provide price support to the farmers, reports BSS.

The approval was given at a meeting of the cabinet held in the cabinet room of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Religious Minister humiliated in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, July 5: A group of musallis (devotees) today accused State Minister for Religious Affairs Maulana Mohammad Nurul Islam of curbing madrasah education and pelted stones, shoes and rotten mangoes at him, reports UNB.

The incident took place as the state minister was coming out of Anderkilla Jame Mosque in the city after Asr prayers. The mosque is managed by the Islamic Foundation. Maulana Islam denied the charge of curbing madrasah education by squeezing government grants for teachers.

But the angry devotees would not believe him. They raised slogans and stopped him on his way. At one stage, stones, shoes and rotten mangoes were thrown at him. The situation continued for nearly half an hour.

The police intervened quickly and escorted the state minister to safety.

Maulana Islam was slightly injured, witnesses said.

None was arrested in this connection.

Festival

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raised by the Bangladesh community in London over inclusion of Beximco as a major patron despite the fact that the company itself was having financial problems and there number of cases were filed against it. The community thinks this may tarnish the image of festival.

It also said the company has not paid salary to the staff of some of its concerns for couple of months.

Deputy Chairman of Beximco Group of Companies Salman F Rahman in an interview with BBC Radio last night admitted that his organisation was listed as a bank defaulter and the allegations — including being a bank defaulter and not being able to pay salary to the staff — were true.

However, he said all the financial problems have been solved and loans of the company have been rescheduled. Therefore, he said, they would be able to run it smoothly from next month.

"We have sponsored the festival to project the positive image of the country abroad," Salman said.

Gaibandha reports: Brahmaputra and Jamuna devoured 12 char villages. The water levels of Brahmaputra, Jamuna, Teesta, Karotoa are on the rise following onrush of hill waters from across the border.

UNB adds: Transportation of cargo by rail wagons in the northern route remained snapped since Saturday. As a result, some 2000 rail wagons with various commodities remained stranded on both sides of the Balashi ferry ghat.

Official sources, however, said the ferry ghat had already been shifted to previous Teestamukh ghat to restore Bahadurabad-Teestamukh ferry route.

In Kurigram, flood situation deteriorated further amidst incessant rain and onrush of hill water.

Officials said river Dharala rose by 38 cm while Brahmaputra 13 cm and Teesta 20 cm inundating low-lying areas of 45 unions, including 125 small shoals.

In Rangpur, army personnel yesterday joined their hands in protecting and repairing Fomari flood protection embankment at Mohali in Gangachhara thana.

Erosion by the river Teesta seriously affected the embankment damaging about 1000 feet of it.

Flood situation in Sirajganj worsened inundating fresh areas.

Low lying areas and 25,000 hectares of croplands in 22 unions of Belkuchi, Shahjadpur, Kazipur, Chouhall and Sadar thanas of the district inundated afresh, said the district agricultural officer.

Our Jamalpur Correspondent writes: Fresh areas in the district have been submerged damaging kutchia homes and crops on a vast tract of land.

About ten villages in Auranna and Pigna unions have been flooded.

According to Kushtia Correspondent, water level of both Ganges and Gorai showed a further rise, inundating more areas and damaging standing crops and Aman seed beds in Daulatpur, Kumarkhali, Bheramara and Khoksa thanas.

People's wrath

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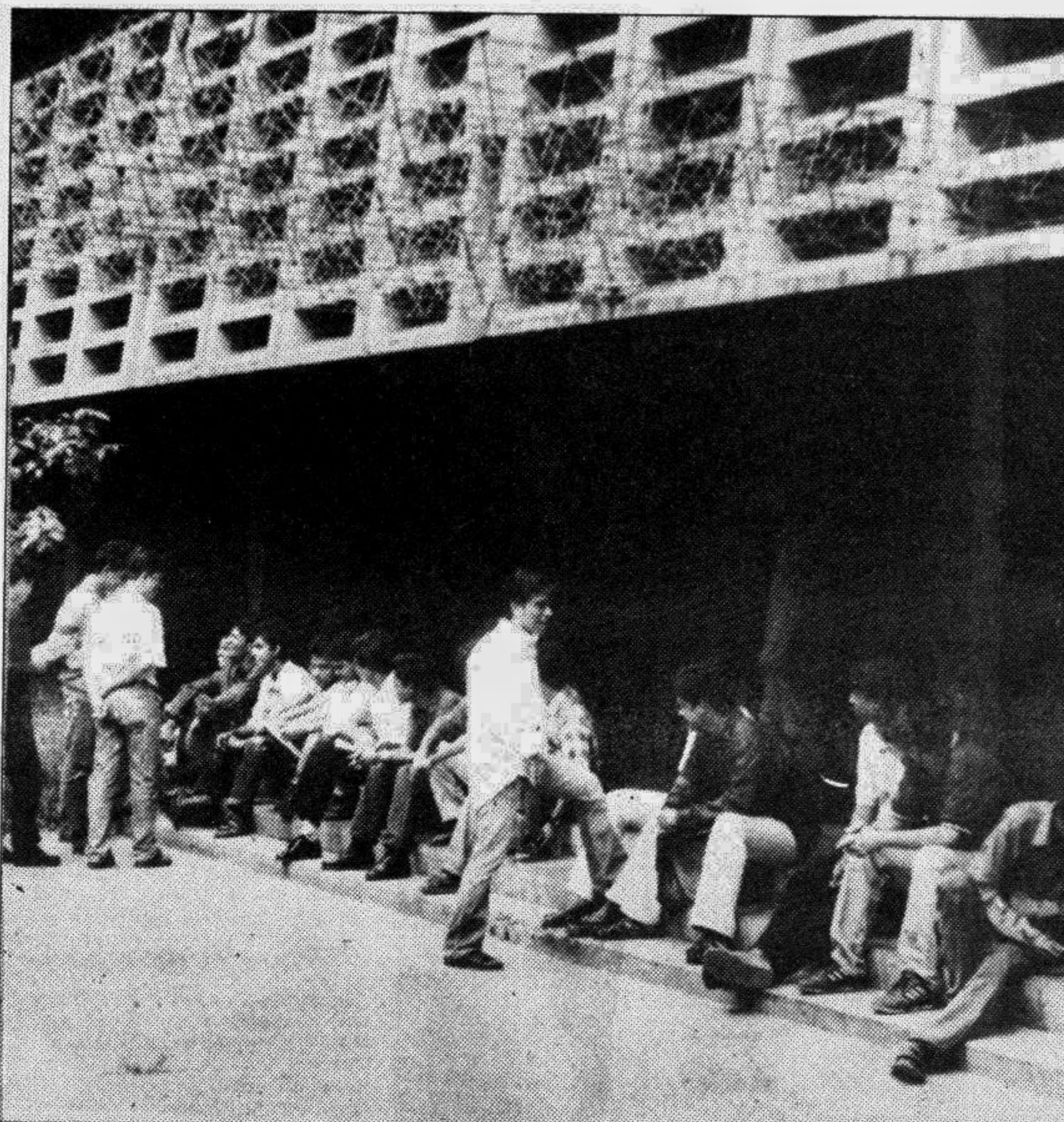
Thursday. Asked why the girl was buried as an unidentified person although her identity was known, Dr M Shahidullah, civil surgeon and superintendent of Narayanganj General Hospital where Jesmin's autopsy was done, said that they had to forward the body as "unidentified and unclaimed" following requests from police and the Tanzin Association.

"We had to do that because of the requests and social realities," he said.

Meanwhile, Saleh Mallik, who performed the religious rites, said he feared tumultuous reaction from local people over the burial of Jesmin for the fact that she was a sex worker. He also said people were talking about the issue.

"If we can arrange burial for flesh traders, smugglers and bribetakers, why not a sex worker?" asked Mallik. "The Almighty is the authority to pass any judgement over the issue and we have to perform our duty after the death of a human being," he said.

Mallik said his predecessor was removed from his job around 10 years back after he had arranged burial for a sex worker. He was branded as a pimp for sex workers, Mallik added.



Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology reopened yesterday two months after the BUET authorities closed it sine die following a series of untoward incidents on the campus.

— Star photo

Free flow of information

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Chairman of Press Council, Javed Jabbar, former information minister of Pakistan, Maju Daruwalla, Director of the CHRI, Ms Khushi Kabir of Nijera Kori, Barrister Salma Sobhan, Barrister Anis Jeelani from Pakistan, Professor S.T. Hettige from Sri-Lanka and Harsh Mander from India, Hussain Naqi, a senior journalist from Pakistan, Indika Perera from Sri-Lanka, Tapan Bose, a human rights activist from Nepal and DN Mistry, a social worker from India took part in the discussions.

The aim of the workshop is to "assess the level of right to information in the participating countries and to share experiences, and to understand the role and importance of right to information in democratic processes in these countries with special reference to participatory governance."

It will also assess the need for legislated right to information within each country and examine and evolve methodologies including media advocacy to develop common policy guidelines. The workshop will adopt recommendations for the SAARC and individual governments.

Speaking on the 'role and importance of the right to information in developing democracies', Dr Kamal Hossain said, the right to information to empower citizens has been incorporated in Bangladesh constitution.

But the possibility of their participation has been marred by denial of access to information. This also denies human right of citizens.

There is no real accountability unless there is information, which is denied under the cover of the Official Secrecy Act, he said.

Dr Kamal Hossain called for a judicial review of the situation. He suggested formation of

a "coalition of right minded people within parliament, government and parties" to formulate laws to ensure the right to information. This will make the government accountable and transparent, he added.

Barrister Amir-ul Islam presented a paper on 'legal context of the right to information'. He said Article 11 of the constitution guarantees fundamental human rights, freedom and respect for the dignity of citizens, and ensures their effective participation in the administration through their elected representatives.

"But the history of Bangladesh, since its independence, merely re-confirms that lack of participation of people has not only deterred the progress of the country but also has made the society more corrupt and vulnerable to terrorism and prejudice."

He said citizens should have "access to bureaucracy records". This will make the government more democratic and accountable.

Bureaucrats should also be protected by law for their disclosures. This will allow them to carry out their duty freely and ensure accountability.

Justice Habibur Rahman Khan said Article 39 of the constitution guarantees press freedom as part of the freedom of expression. A Press Council has been set up to prevent abuse of freedom of press.

Barrister Salma Sobhan criticised the system of introduction of bills in parliament and their passage without informing the people and public debate.

Earlier, Maja Daruwalla, Director of CHRI explained that the objective of the workshop was to help develop an effective tool for defending the poor people who constitute the majority in South Asia.

Harsh Mehta from India cited the experience of a 'social audit' in Madhya Pradesh where access to records helped cut pilferage in food distribution for the poor. The 'social audit' was needed because government mechanism for accountability failed, he said.

Hossain Naqi, a veteran Pakistani journalist recalled how the Ayub regime had started gagging the press and the journalists' struggled to protect press freedom. He recalled his comrades KG Mostafa and Ataus Samad in those days in the then East Pakistan.

Javed Jabbar, a former Pakistani information minister under Benazir Bhutto's government said, history shows that from Maurya to Akbar, the monarchs had always tried to document their rule. Even district gazetteers had contained information. But now, Indian books are not available in Pakistan and viewing of Pakistan TV is banned in India.

Ms Khushi Kabir cited the lack of information about the Magurchhara explosion while drilling for gas. "We do not know about the environmental damage and compensation," she added.

Tarun Bose of the South Asian Human Rights Forum based in Nepal said the governments in South Asia hide their defence budgets. "I have a right to know what a government is doing as well as what a multi-national is doing," he said while citing the case of gas explosion in a Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, India. He also noted the "disappearance of 32000 Naxalites" in India as well as abuse of the Special Powers Act in Bangladesh.

Indika Perera from Sri-Lanka said in his country, most information is known but are not legally obtainable because of Secrecy Act, slapped in 1955.

Jail Killing Case: CID may talk to Abu Sayeed

CID police, who are investigating the November 3, 1975, Jail Killing Case, may talk to state minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed to ascertain veracity of information stated in his book about the death of an accused, reports UNB.

The Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, which is holding trial of the case, Sunday ordered reinvestigation into the case before framing charges against the accused.

Legal experts said the Court has apparently taken cognizance of information in the book "Bangabandhu Murder: Facts & Documents" and statement of prosecution witness about the role of accused Moslemuddin and Naik A Ali, to order reinvestigation.

Sayeed, the author of the book, has written: "Before his death, Moslemuddin admitted that he had shot dead Sheikh Mujib. Moslemuddin, a subedar, was repatriated from Pakistan in 1973."

Moslemuddin was involved in October 2, 1977 abortive coup and taken into custody. Special Military Tribunal sentenced him to death. In his statement before death, Moslemuddin said

he is being hanged for the killing Sheikh Mujib....

According to law, a dead man cannot be prosecuted in any case.

Police had visited his village home in Shibpur, Narsingdi, talked to his wife and other family members and finally confiscated his property in a bid to trace and arrest him. "We did not have any indication that Moslemuddin was dead", said a CID official.

But police investigation showed that Moslemuddin was not repatriated from Pakistan. He was in Bangladesh during the Liberation War.

The investigating officials said they would submit on time the additional charge sheet regarding Moslemuddin and A Ali as directed by the Court. There was no evidence available that Moslemuddin is dead, and hence he was shown as absconding in the charge sheet.

No trace was available about A Ali. That is why he was not charge sheeted, the police said.

Police officials also said information in any book could not constitute an evidence for trial of a criminal case.

Khaleda: Conspiracy

From Page 1

vehicles. But those are being bought at higher prices to make our Army chained by India.

The former prime minister alleged that the government was also planning to buy navy frigates from South Korea. But South Korea itself does not use the frigate which Bangladesh is going to purchase, she added.

There is apprehension, she said, that India may attack Bangladesh due to its geographical location. "What shall we do if we need to go to India for maintenance or repair of MIG-29 and Ashok vehicles in such an emergency situation?" she asked. "The MIG and Ashok trucks then might turn into show pieces and there would be no way but to send those to Tungipara."

Similarly, the frigates will also turn into show pieces because Bangladesh will have to go to western countries for spare parts and repair of those. "We would not be able to purchase spare parts or other services if we don't have defence cooperation agreement with the western countries concerned," Begum Zia said.

She asked the government to immediately stop 'conspiring' against the country. Otherwise, she warned, those belonging to AL would not get any opportunity to flee the country.

Calling upon the people to observe the July 8 countryside dawn-to-dusk hartal, the BNP chief said the hartal has been called to protest the anti-people budget, conspiracy to give corridor in the name of transit to India, price hike of essentials and electricity crisis.

On the new budget, she said it is aimed at making Bangladesh handicapped and dependent on India permanently. In this budget, the government has imposed direct and indirect tax totalling about Tk 3000 crore.

The opposition leader said almost all mills and factories have been closed due to the wrong policy of this government. Now this budget will force the remaining few industries to close down and this will help India to set up new industries.

Presided over by city BNP convenor Sadek Hossain Khoka, the meeting was addressed by, among others, Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, M Saifur Rahman, Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Dr Khandaker

Mosharraf Hossain, M Shamsul Islam, Tariqul Islam, Kurshid Jahan Haq MP, Rajshahi Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu, Mirza Abbas, Amanullah Aman MP, Nazimuddin Alam MP and Ehsanul Haq Milon MP.

Later, leaders and activists of BNP brought out a procession led by Begum Zia. The processionists chanted slogans in support of the July 8 hartal.

Dhaka-Calcutta bus run begins

Commercial bus service between Dhaka and Calcutta began yesterday, reports BSS.

Two air-conditioned luxury buses — one belonging to state owned BRTC and the other from Shyamoli Paribahan, a private company — took part in the maiden journey, leaving the city at 7.30 am from BRTC inter-country bus terminal at Kamalapur.

"We are hopeful that full-fledged commercial bus run from both ends of the two countries will be initiated from July 9," Karar Mahmudul Hassan, joint secretary of communication ministry said.

One killed in Khagrachhari gunfight

KHAGRACHHARI, July 5: One school boy was killed and two others were injured in a gunfight between the two rival groups over toll collection from a rubber plant here today, police said, reports BSS.

The school boy, identified as Bhuvanjoy Chakma, 18, died on the spot. The two other injured were identified as Jagadish Chakma, 22, and Lambhu Chakma, 35.

The seriously injured Jagadish was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) while Lambhu admitted to Khagrachhari Sadar Hospital.

Khagrachhari police super told the news agency that the gunfight erupted at 7.30 am today over toll collection from a rubber plant at "Bhai Bohn Chhara", owned by repatriated tribal people.



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