



VOL. IX NO. 172 REGD. NO. DA 781

INTERNET: <http://www.dailystarnews.com>

SRABAN 3 1406 BS

DHAKA SUNDAY JULY 18, 1999

RABIUS SUNY 4, 1420 HIJRI

16 PAGES : PRICE TAKA 6.00

Power tariff raised by 5 poisha per unit

Star Report
The government has increased power tariff by five poisha per unit with retrospective effect from July 1 as per recommendation of the Asian Development Bank, official sources said.

Besides, power tariffs among PDB, DESA and REB have also been raised. PDB's power tariff charged from DESA has been increased by eight poisha per unit to Tk 1.8 and PDB-ESA's power tariff charged from REB also by eight poisha per unit, making it Tk 1.73.

"Coupled with the imposition of 15 per cent VAT on a 'truncated basis', power would be much costlier at all consumers' level," said an official.

"A typical middle class family which uses 300 units of power per month would now pay an additional Tk 15. The family would pay 15 per cent VAT on 55 per cent of the power consumed per month and that would be nearly double the previous duty structure," he added.

The energy ministry favoured a tariff hike by 12 poisha per unit but the government decided to increase it by 5 poisha, one source mentioned.

The Cabinet suggested that PDB and DESA should try harder to reduce system loss to improve the financial health of energy sector," he said.

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PM apprises President about her UK visit

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday apprised President Shahabuddin Ahmed about her recent visit to the United Kingdom at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair, reports UNB.

She met the President at Bangabhaban and told him that the visit has helped improve relations between the two countries.

Hasina also talked about the Bangladesh Festival she and Blair jointly inaugurated in London. The festival projecting our cultural heritage was a prestigious event for Bangladesh," she said.

She said the objective of her visit was to attract private investment from UK and the visit would provide impetus to the British participation in the field of economic development of the country.

The PM informed the President that besides official talks with her British counterpart, she met with the leaders of the British government and the opposition and discussed issues of mutual interest.

She also informed the President that Tony Blair had accepted an invitation to visit Bangladesh at a convenient time.

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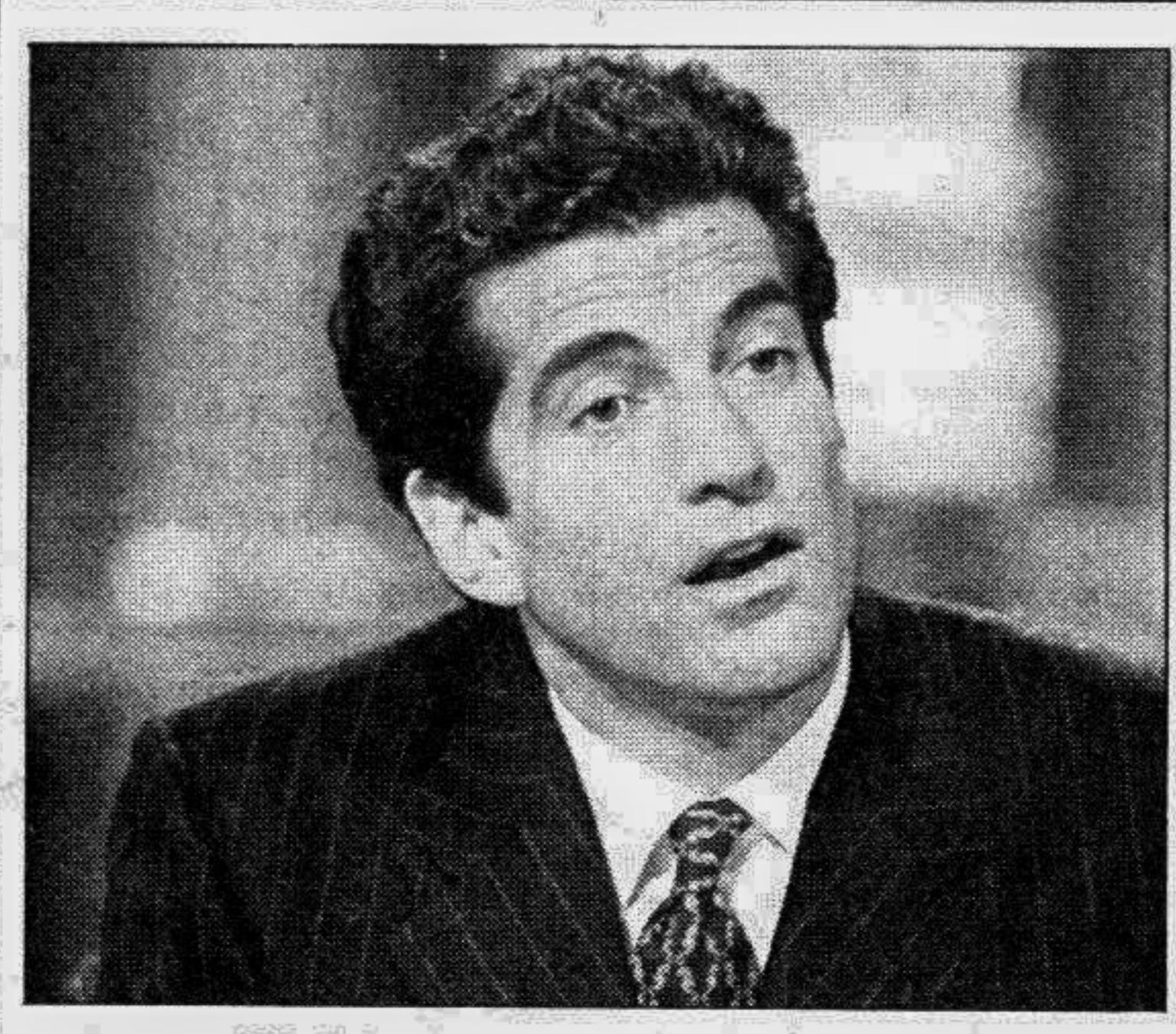
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Prayer Timings

July 18

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-10	4-15
Johr	12-50	1-25
Asr	4-55	5-05
Maghrib	7-00	7-05
Esha	7-55	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation



AFP File photo of John F Kennedy Jr.

Police hardly raid hideouts of pirates

Defence cargo ship had no security escort

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, July 17: Despite frequent incidents of piracy at the outer anchorage of Chittagong port, no security escort was arranged for the ship carrying defence cargo imported for the Army and the Air Force, sources said.

A senior port official, when contacted, said 'All cargo ships are given similar treatment when those arrive at the outer anchorage. No special security measures are normally taken by the Chittagong Port Authority for defence cargo. Those are only given priority berthing facility at the port jetties.'

A source in the port security said, 'Ships carrying defence cargo should be given special

escort at the outer anchorage in view of Wednesday's incident of piracy at such a vessel.'

However, after unloading, the defence cargo is being delivered from Chittagong port under 'heavy escort'.

The imported ammunition

were taken to Dhaka by goods train from Chittagong port to day under Army escort, he said.

The ship, MV Karen Cat, which came under attack of pirates, carried 549 tonnes of ammunition for the Army and the Air Force.

Incidents of piracy have gone up at the outer anchorage of Chittagong port and in the river Karnaphuli, posing a threat to safety and security of

Ships carrying defence cargo should be given special

Plane with J F Kennedy Jr missing

WEST TISBURY (Massachusetts), July 17: A small plane carrying John F Kennedy Jr. to a wedding on Martha's Vineyard was reported missing early today and a search was underway off the coast of New York's Long Island, officials said, reports AP.

The plane took off at 8:45 pm (0145 GMT) Friday and was believed to be carrying Kennedy, his wife, Carolyn Bessette, and her sister and was headed to the Cape Cod-Martha's Vineyard area where the Kennedy family was gathering for a wedding, a source told The Associated Press.

The plane flew out of New Jersey and was due into Martha's Vineyard at 10 pm Friday, the source said.

The Coast Guard confirmed it was searching for the plane

with help from the Air National Guard. The search was being conducted in water off eastern tip of Long Island, along the presumed flight path of Kennedy's plane.

Jamie Gaspar, an operations specialist at Martha's Vineyard Airport, said Kennedy's plane was supposed to arrive Friday night but never did.

"I'm a little worried, because I know him personally," Gaspar said.

Kennedy is the son of one of America's most popular presidents, John F Kennedy, who was assassinated in 1963.

Eddie Martin, of Hyannisport, who described himself as a friend of the family, said he was told Kennedy was headed for Martha's Vineyard and was then to go to the wedding of a

cousin, Rory, daughter of the

late Sen. Robert F Kennedy, in Hyannisport.

According to an earlier announcement from the office of Democratic Sen. Edward M Kennedy, the couple was to be married Saturday before 275 guests in a private ceremony. The wedding was cancelled as the search began.

The source told the AP the plane took off from Caldwell, New Jersey, en route to Martha's Vineyard, and did not file a flight plan, to the knowledge of the Federal Aviation Administration. A flight plan was not required.

The Kennedy family contacted the FAA when the plane, a Piper Saratoga, was overdue, and the agency began checking airports along the route, the source said.

The Coast Guard and Air Na-

tional Guard then started a search.

Kennedy, 38, is the only surviving son of the 35th president. His father's assassination immediately thrust him into the public eye with the poignant photo of the little boy saluting as his father's funeral procession passed.

Unlike other family members, Kennedy never entered politics. After graduating from Brown University, he went to law school and joined the Manhattan district attorney's office.

The law didn't hold much appeal for Kennedy, and in 1995 he launched the magazine George — subtitled "not just politics as usual." A year later, Kennedy — once dubbed "the sexiest man alive" by People magazine — married girlfriend Carolyn Bessette.

BBC report

AL to hire helicopter for polls campaign

Star Report

The Awami League has decided to hire a helicopter for campaigning in national elections and also in the upcoming upazila and city corporation polls, BBC reported last night.

Though the party has denied it, a contract in this regard clearly provides for such use.

A local private aviation company is trying to procure the helicopter from Thailand or any other South-East Asian country.

The rent for the 10-seater twin-engine BK 117 helicopter will be Tk 100,000 per hour and Tk 20,000 will be paid in advance. The chopper will be available from the first week of August.

It is mentioned in the contract that use of the helicopter in campaign will be subject to the Election Commission's approval, BBC said.

A former state minister and Awami League MP Syed Abul Hossain signed the contract with the aviation company.

AL General Secretary Zillur Rahman was not available for comment. But Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad denied that helicopter would be used for election campaign.

Following a press report on helicopter, Gano Forum President DR. Kamal Hossain at a press conference in Dhaka yesterday demanded of the government to publication of details about hiring of the helicopter, BBC added.

Munshi withdraws resignation letter

BNP lawmaker Manjurul Ahsan Munshi has withdrawn his resignation letter, reports UNB.

On Thursday, Munshi, elected from Comilla-4 (Debidib) sent a letter to BNP Chairman Begum Khaleda Zia resigning from the party membership expressing his resignation over the new BNP committee in Comilla North.

In another letter yesterday, Munshi withdrew his resignation letter following the removal of Abu Taher from the leadership of the party's Comilla North unit, said a party press release signed by BNP assistant office secretary Emran Saleh Prince.

Two incidents
DU to issue showcause notices on 5 students

Dhaka University authorities yesterday decided to issue showcause notices on five students for their alleged involvement in terrorist activities in two separate incidents, reports UNB.

The authorities also formed two inquiry committees to probe the incidents.

The students have to reply to the notices within seven days, otherwise, the showcause notices would be treated as temporary expulsion orders, said a DU press release.

The authorities took the decision at a meeting with Pro-Vice-Chancellor Shahadat Ali and Pro-VC Prof. Shahidullah and A F Rahman Hall yesterday afternoon.

The students against whom showcause notices will be issued include Neamul Islam Dablu and Ehsan, first year (old) students of International Relations, and Murad, first year (old) student of Political Science centring A F Rahman Hall incident.

Two rounds of gunshots were fired on Friday in the hall centring the allotment of a seat.

The inquiry committee to investigate the incident of A F Rahman Hall.

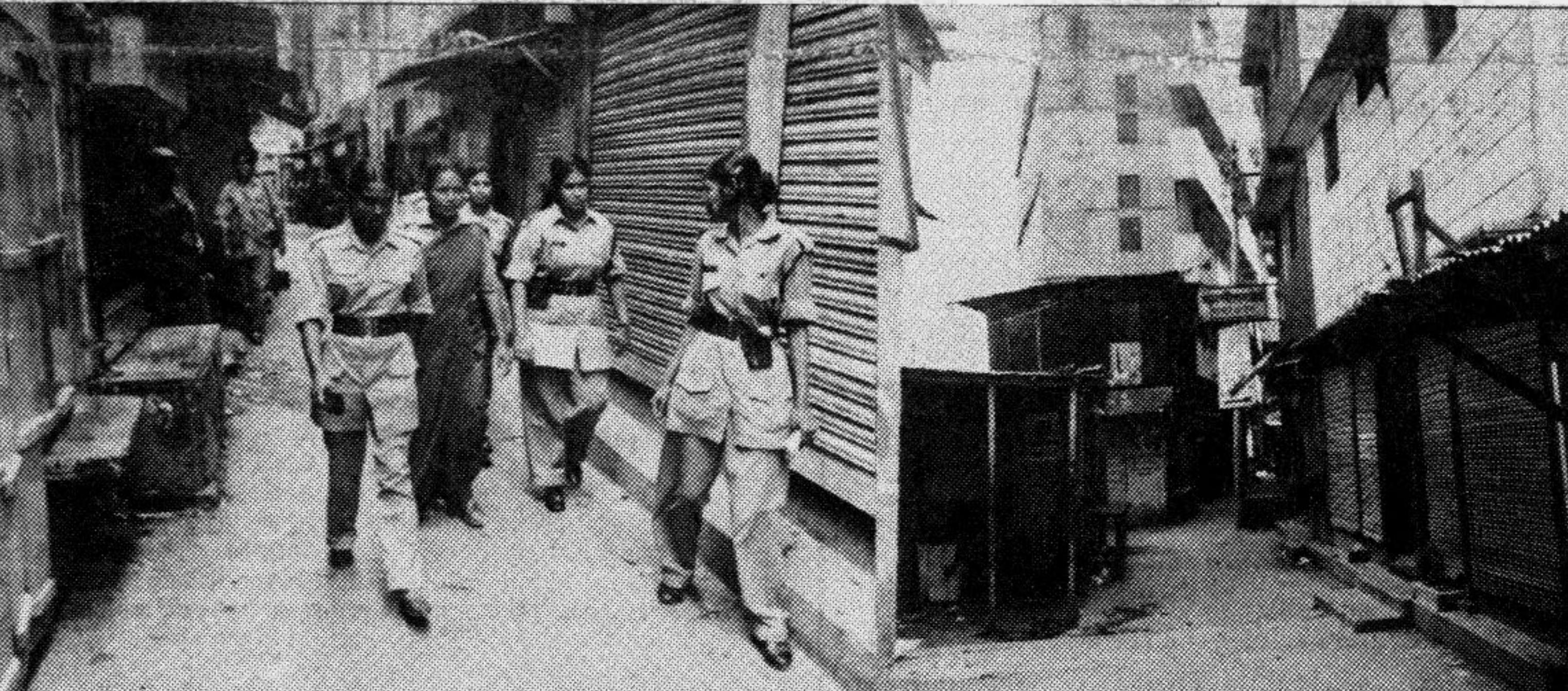
464 former outlaws to join Ansar today

A total of 464 former outlaws, who surrendered recently in response to the government's amnesty offer, will be recruited in the Ansar force at Khulna and Jhenidah police lines today, reports BSS.

A total of 733 former extremists from Khulna division have so far surrendered to the authorities with over 500 firearms taking the opportunity of rehabilitation promised by the government, they said.

The educational qualifications and physical fitness of the outlaws would be relaxed for recruiting in Bangladesh Ansar, Inspector General of Police AYB Siddiqui told BSS yesterday.

They will be taken to the Ansar Academy at Mouchak for a month's training after which they will be posted to different districts, the IGP added.



Women police deployed (left) as the Tanbazar brothel now gives a deserted look.

Star photo

Two-thirds of sex workers flee brothels

Exodus to spread deadly diseases in N'ganj town, fear people, experts

From Ehsanul Haque

NARAYANGANJ, July 17: Panicked sex workers of Tanbazar and Nimtoli brothels are now roaming in different areas of the town, spreading virus of deadly diseases like AIDS.

More than two thousand sex workers, who fled the tension-ridden red-light areas, have taken refuge in different areas of the town including Jimkhana, Paikpara, Deobhog, Masdar, Isdair, Channbari, Bandar and even Panchabari on the outskirts. Some local people said they are worried because the sex workers have taken shelter in the residential areas.

According to a government survey, only 1058 sex workers are now staying in the two

brothels against 3,425 earlier. The exodus was triggered by tension prevailing since the murder of a sex worker at Tanbazar on July 1 and a subsequent government move to rehabilitate them.

The survey that concluded today began after a high level meeting at the Prime Minister's Secretariat on July 12 decided to rehabilitate the sex workers to earn livelihood for myself, my two children and others in the family. What can I do? I found no client at Tanbazar brothel in 13 days, she told this correspondent yesterday.

Abdur Rahim, a resident at Masdar, said frequent movement of borkha-wearing sex workers is now in sight in his area. "Their suspicious move-

ment with clients and in search of clients have made us concerned."

Prof. Nazrul Islam, Head of the Department of Virology at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, expressed deep concern that sex workers have come out of the brothels in Narayanganj. "Condoms were supplied to the sex workers earlier for prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) including AIDS. Now it has become difficult to continue it because they have spread all over Narayanganj."

"Clients of the sex workers should also be taken into consideration. The clients are a See Page 12 Col 6

relating to national interest both in and outside the parliament. Important decision on valuable natural resources like oil and gas has been taken without any discussion with people. Even the Jatiya Sangsads has not been informed.

Referring to controversy over recent purchase of MIG-29 jet fighters, he said the purchase involving over Tk 500 crore in foreign currency took place without any transparency. The Parliament or the parliamentary standing committee concerned were not informed about this purchase.

He said the prime minister was forced to cancel the allotment of 301 Rajuk plots following widespread public outcry. "Now the government must in-

form the people about the real reason behind this arbitrary and discriminatory action."

Expressing dissatisfaction over the role of the opposition in parliament, he said they should shun violence and show respect to the rule of law and democratic norms. They should go for movement outside the parliament only as a last resort.

Dr Kamal stressed the need for united efforts to free the country's politics for the clutches of black money and arms. The Election Commission should also have to take urgent measures to free the electoral process from the claws of black money.

Congratulating the recent verdict made by the Supreme Court against bank defaulter, he blasted the government for not discussing any matter

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'Black money holders, loan defaulters rule country'

By Staff Correspondent

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