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Jubo League leader murder sparks violence at Atrai

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAH, Aug 6: The violence sparked by the murder of Atrai Jubo League leader Anwar Hossain Belal, continued in the area for the second day today.

At least ten people were injured, one of them seriously, in the violence.

Anwar Hossain Belal, 32, brother of assassinated Awami League leader Siddiqueur Rahman Raja, was murdered by a group of unidentified assailant at Singara Damdama village under Atrai thana Wednesday night.

Protesting the murder, the agitating supporters of Belal set two houses ablaze near the killing spot yesterday.

They also beat up ten BNP activists and set fire to one oil depot, three cloth stores and five stationery shops at Atrai thana headquarters today.

The seriously injured BNP activists Mujibur Rahman was admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital. His condition is stated to be critical.

Local unit of Awami League blamed BNP activists for the murder.

They brought out a procession at Atrai today demanding immediate arrest of the killers.

None was arrested in connection with Belal murder till writing of this report at 8 pm today.

Transport workers threaten strike from Aug 10

Nearly 10 lakh transport workers have threatened to go for an indefinite strike across the country from August 10 to press home their 11-point demand, reports UNB.

The demands include amendment to the Industrial Relations Ordinance 1969, cancellations of fake registration of transport workers' union and owners' association, effective steps to stop illegal toll collection and highway robbery.

Bangladesh Road Transport Workers' Federation has called the strike from 6 am Tuesday after its several rounds of talks with the government failed.

In support of the indefinite strike, the transport workers will bring out 'transport procession' in the capital from Mahakhali Inter-District Bus Terminal today.

The Federation led by its president Waziduddin Khan, MP, and executive president Shahjahan Khan, MP, both from the ruling Awami League, had enforced strike in 1997 and 1998 to realise its demands.

Earlier, the Federation signed agreement with the government three but those were not implemented, said Federation office secretary M H Rahman.

In reply to a question, he said Communications Minister Anwar Hossain invited the Federation leaders to a meeting tomorrow (Aug 8) to discuss the

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Prayer Timings

August 7		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:10	4:15
Johr	12:50	1:25
Asr	5:00	5:10
Maghrib	6:55	7:00
Esha	7:55	8:15

Source: Islamic Foundation

Oxygen supply disrupted for several hours at DMCH

Death of four patients at ICU alleged

By Staff Correspondent

Normal supply of oxygen at different units of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) including the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) was disrupted for several hours starting from the early hours of yesterday as the 'disk' of the liquid oxygen tank 'leaked'.

There were allegations that four persons died at the ICU yesterday due to disruption in oxygen supply, caused by leakage in the oxygen tank.

The four were identified as Bhanu, 20, Kamrul Hasan, 18, Shila, 25, and Mosarraf, 10.

According to hospital sources, all the four died between 2 am and 7 am yesterday.

When contacted, a senior doctor at the ICU denied the allegations saying, "Condition of the patients was very bad and their chances of survival was very slim."

"One of the patients was suffering from pesticide poisoning. Three others were suffering from meningitis (brain death), viral infection of brain and myopathy (breathing problem)", he told The Daily Star on condition of anonymity.

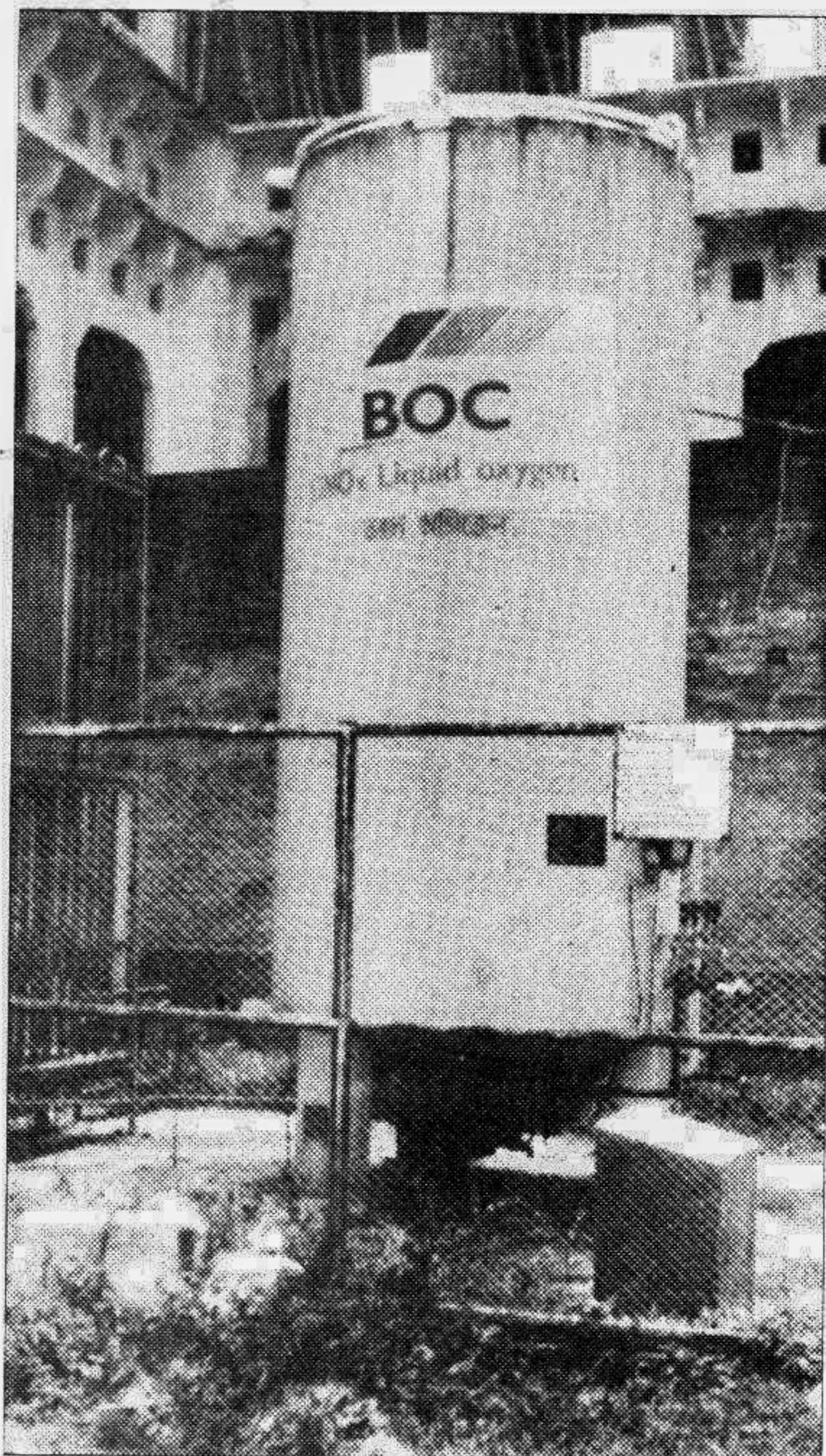
Other doctors said, ICU always keeps adequate stock of oxygen cylinders as alternative arrangement. "There was no shortage of oxygen cylinders," another doctor claimed.

When contacted Business Manager of BOC's Medical Division Mohammad Sabir said, "The safety disk of the tank that prevents gas explosion leaked automatically."

He also said, "When the disk leaked, DMCH authorities did not inform our technicians stationed at the hospital. So, naturally, there was a crisis of oxygen."

Saber claimed that there was no pipeline supply of oxygen at the DMCH from 1 am to 7 am yesterday. BOC is responsible for supplying oxygen at the DMCH.

The oxygen pipeline system was recently introduced at the hospital. The hospital always keeps a large quantity of oxygen cylinders for any emergency, Saber said.



The liquid oxygen tank at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. — Star photo

88pc of rural people healthy

City dwellers often fall ill due to pollution

By Reaz Ahmad

Fortunate are those who live in the countryside and breathe fresh air in a healthier environment compared to the urban people who are literally stalked by the silent killer - pollution.

The city fathers and government policy makers should take note that a recent study reveals, nearly 88 per cent of the rural population are reported to be healthy, while only 34 per cent of the urban population residing in the non-slum households and 18 per cent of the slum dwellers are reportedly do so.

Nearly two-thirds of slum residents and half the non-slum residents suffer from occasional illness compared to only about 16 per cent in the rural areas says a joint study done by BIDS and IIRI.

The poor health conditions of urban residents are attributed to rapidly deteriorating air quality in Dhaka city, unhealthy sanitary conditions and very high density of population.

Higher prevalence of fever and cough among the sample population cutting across socio-economic lines and higher rate of morbidity suggest higher level of environmental pollution in urban areas than in rural ones, says a researcher.

Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) and

the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) jointly carried out the study throughout 1998 and came up with these findings. Recently, three researchers, Mahabub Hossain, Rita Afzar and Manik Lal Bose used a 1991 household survey in Dhaka, and opinion surveys conducted by BIDS for rural households in 1988 and 1995 as baseline data.

While carrying out the study in 1998, the researchers took the same four metropolitan areas - Lalbagh, Jurain, Purana Paltan, and Mirpur - as samples. For each area 150 households were taken as samples, one third of which were again drawn from slums and squatter areas.

A large majority of the sick population suffer from fever, cough, general weakness, gastro-enteritis, asthma, diabetes and blood pressure - all have direct links to a polluted environment.

The overall morbidity rate defined as the proportion of sick members of the families in the sample population is 50 per cent. Considering age composition, morbidity rate is highest for the 65 plus age group (83 per cent) followed by the 40 plus population (73 per cent) and children under 5 (65 per cent).

Rapid growth of the urban population and concentration

of 10 million people in one city puts strain on land use, natural resources and urban services jeopardising the urban environment and undermines sustainable development.

The study shows that although the entire Dhaka population are affected by environmental degradation, urban poor are the most vulnerable to health hazards since they lack adequate water and sanitation services and are located mostly in low-lying areas adjacent to dumpsites of garbage or industrial wastes or marshy, swampy lands.

Another recent study also supplements such observation saying that poorer people who live in illegal and unprotected areas are more vulnerable to the risks of health hazards than the richer population.

It says, the water quality is not adequate, sewerage system is also inadequate. It also notes that there is serious traffic congestion as well as smoke, noise and air pollution.

It blames slothful municipal authorities for bringing in no change in outdated garbage disposal practices that pose threat to health, hygiene and habitation.

Lack of vision in urban development and inefficient metropolitan management that

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Sitakunda BNP leader murder: 4 arrested

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 6: Four people were arrested today in connection with the killing of Sitakunda BNP leader Chowdhury Md Shahjahan.

Of the arrested, three were FIR-named accused in the murder case. The names of the arrested could not be known.

The janaja for Md. Shahjahan was held this morning and he was buried at the family graveyard.

After the janaja, local BNP activists brought out a procession on Dhaka-Chittagong highway, disrupting traffic for several hours. They chanted slogans demanding immediate arrest of the killers.

Two murdered in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Aug 6: Two persons were killed in the city Thursday night.

Police quoting eyewitnesses said, Taslim Hossain Sanjoy, 24, an armed cadre of Purbo Banglar Communist Party was gunned down by four unidentified assailants at about 10-30 pm near poultry farm at Pabla under Daulatpur thana.

The Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Daulatpur thana said that Sanjoy was wanted in four murder cases. He was one of the resources and urban services jeopardising the urban environment and undermines sustainable development.

All but Sanjoy of the FIR-named accused in Awami League leader Tarafdar Hasan and Jubo League activist Bikash Barhoi murder cases, he said.

Police are yet to unearth the motive behind the killing. Sanjoy did not surrender to police to take advantage of general amnesty.

But local people told this correspondent that Sanjoy was killed by his rivals of the party. All but Sanjoy of the Daulatpur-based unit of BECP surrendered to police on July 30. Police recovered a printed black cap and the motorbike he was riding before being gunned down.

None has so far been arrested in this connection.

In another incident, sweeper Sitaran, 38, was stabbed to

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Noori Mosque Digging on as 25 more human bones found

By Staff Correspondent

The Liberation War Museum authorities recovered more 25 pieces of human bones from the well on the premises of Noori Mosque at Mirpur in the city yesterday.

Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka Abdul Sattar Khan visited the site and requested the mosque committee to suspend their building construction work to facilitate excavation, Director of the Museum Akku Choudhury said when contacted over telephone yesterday evening.

"We are yet to reach the bottom of the well where we may find more human bones", he said.

Digging was suspended yesterday and will be started after giving protection to the adjoining wall so that it does not collapse due to digging, he said.

A human skull was found in the well when the mosque committee started digging it for piling work on July 27. They informed the Liberation War Museum authorities which started digging there on July 31.

So far, more than 150 pieces of human bone, clothing materials, sandals, boots and some other articles have been recovered from the well.

Cases against 'rapists and killers' JU authorities to work out modalities today

From Gobinda Bar at Jahangirnagar University

The Jahangirnagar University Syndicate will work out today the modalities of filing cases against 'identified rapists and killers'.

The Syndicate meets at 3:00 pm at the Administrative Building.

The JU authorities have agreed in principle to file cases against the accused in the wake of mounting student protests on the campus, sources concerned said.

Earlier in October last year, the authorities had refused to file cases against the identified rapists and killers despite strong agitations by the students.

Meanwhile, the General Stu-

dents Unity (GSU) at JU brought out a torch procession and held a rally yesterday, demanding filing of criminal cases against the students responsible for rapes and killings on the campus.

Addressing the rally, the GSU leaders called upon the authorities to drive out all the 'terrorists' from the campus and restore a congenial academic atmosphere.

The GSU will gherao the venue when the Syndicate meets today.

More than 20 students were raped by leaders of the ruling Awami League-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) on the campus last year.

according to a probe body report. A BCL leader, Ananda Ghosh, was killed in a clash between rival factions on November 3, 1997.

Meanwhile, the Karmachari Samity and Karmachari Union, associations of class three and class four employees respectively of JU, will go on a week-long strike from today to press their demands.

The demands include their representation in the JU Senate, Syndicate and Finance Committee and an end to 20 per cent deduction from their pension money.

The university authorities have decided to meet leaders of the employees associations tomorrow.

Huge outstanding loans Janata Bank summons Beximco owner

By Inam Ahmed

The Janata Bank (JB) has decided to summon Salman F Rahman, owner of Beximco Pharmaceuticals, Monday to discuss how he will repay the bank's huge outstanding loans to his companies.

"We have called Beximco owner Monday to explain the bouncing of cheques and his loan situation," said Managing Director of JB Aminul Islam, talking to The Daily Star.

The Bank's board in a meeting Wednesday also asked the management to prepare a statement of facts regarding how loans to Beximco Pharma were approved without meeting the loan conditionalities.

"The persons responsible will be identified and the

statement will be forwarded to the finance ministry and the Bangladesh Bank for actions against them," said the MD.

JB will also notify the Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB) and the SEC about Beximco's failure to repay debenture loans.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Bank is conducting an investigation into the irregularities in sanctioning loans.

Beximco Pharma had deposited three post-dated cheques with JB which later bounced thrice and it then took out money without meeting the conditions. The whole affair came to light when a board member made a random in-

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Providing corridor is treachery: BNP

By Staff Correspondent

BNP chief Khaleda Zia has urged all to resist the government move to provide 'corridor' facility to India in the name of transshipment, saying it will prove disastrous for the country.

"The government, since its assumption of power, has been taking steps that go against the independence, sovereignty, integrity and interests of the country. It is now trying to invite a disaster for the nation by giving corridor to India," she said.

MV Sam yet to be rescued

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Aug 6: MV Sam is yet to be moved to a safer place, or declared abandoned.

The distressed ship today remained 19 nautical miles north-east of the Bay of Bengal.

MV Khadem of Bangladesh Navy is yet to reach the vessel for carrying out rescue operation.

According to the latest message sent by Capt Salahuddin to the local agent of the vessel, water has been pumped out of the engine room. The Viking Associates Ltd of Chittagong has been appointed new shipping

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She was addressing an emergency joint meeting of National Executive Committee, National Standing Committee, Advisory Council, MPs and presidents and general secretaries of all front organisations at her Minto Road official residence. Some 118 leaders attended the meeting.

Khaleda, also the leader of the opposition, said anarchy, stagnation and frustration are everywhere, yet the government is paying no attention to the problems.

The government is isolated from the people due to its misrule, autocratic behaviour and repressive measures, the former prime minister claimed. She alleged that the ruling party is trying to cling to power by adopting subversive policy.

The opposition leader said opposition parties along with the people will not let the government fulfil its ill motive.

In one of its resolutions, the meeting termed the government move to provide corridor facility to India as suicidal, anti-state and act of treachery.

The meeting warned that the government would not be allowed to implement its conspiracy and vowed to resist this 'heinous game' at any cost.

An unprecedented secrecy was maintained during the

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Moslemuddin Delhi yet to confirm arrest

Star Report

The government is yet to receive any official information from the Indian authorities that Assam police have arrested a person resembling Moslemuddin, sentenced to death in absentia in the Bangabandhu murder case. BBC reported yesterday.

BBC quoted Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad as saying that the Indian government did not officially inform anything about the reported arrest. But Indian officials have informally contacted Bangladesh officials in this regard.

The government has asked Bangladesh Deputy High Commission in India to identify the arrested person, BBC said.

Fifteen persons have been sentenced to death in the Bangabandhu murder case. Five of them are in jail. The government has requested Interpol for arrest of the absconders.

SPA was scrapped on Dec 6, '90, claims Ershad

Deposed president H M Ershad has accused President Shahabuddin Ahmed of violating the Constitution by not executing an ordinance abrogating the Special Powers Act while he was head of the caretaker government, reports UNB.

"The Special Powers Act was revoked along with two other acts, which stood down the Ershad, who stood down the same day in the face of an uprising against his nine-year regime."

But Shahabuddin, as head of the caretaker government thereafter, did not execute the ordinance regarding SPA although the two others were implemented, alleged Ershad who is chairman of opposition Jatuya Party.

Ershad was talking to the leaders of National Lawyers Federation who called on him at his Baridhara office yesterday.

Ershad spoke his mind amid a controversy on the SPA issue.

"It was an extreme violation of the state Constitution. He violated the Constitution, although as a Justice it was his duty to protect the Constitution," the former president said, terming it a 'lone instance in world history'.

He also shrugged off the idea that he tried to strike off the strong-arm law to protect himself. "It's totally a false propaganda."

The prime minister, minis-

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BCB names Selection Committee

Sports Reporter

Former national paceman and Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) vice-president Tanvir Haider has been appointed the new chairman of the three-member national selection committee, which was formed at the BCB executive committee meeting yesterday.

Former national opener and captain, and BCB member Roquibul Hassan, and former national cricketer Tanjeed Ahsan Saad are the other two members of the committee, which has been formed four months after the Siraj-led committee was scrapped last May.

The meeting also approved the appointment of South African coach Eddie Barlow as their new Director of Development for two years from September 1. Earlier, the name of the post was Director of Coaching.

Chaired by BCB president Saber Hossain Chowdhury, most of the members of the board were present at the meeting, which began in the afternoon and continued for more than four hours.

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All this to 'check visa forgery'!

By Rafiq Hasan

Several hundred people, most of them commercial officers of garments factories, gather every day in front of the office of Export Promotion Bureau's Textile Cell at Motijheel in the city for various garments-related matters but none is allowed to enter the office.

The main gate of the office is always kept locked and several armed Ansar personnel deployed at the gate ensure that none of those people can get into the office.

People gather there mainly for quota transfer, quota allotment, export visa and licence for garments export. They keep on waiting outside the gate from morning till late in the evening. At times, they become agitated and start shouting.

When asked, one of them said that they were being treated very badly and prevented from entering a government office where they had various urgent work. "Most of us are highly educated and EPB officials should not treat us like that," said an agitated com-

mmercial officer of a city garments factory.

Previously we would get export visa in four-five hours but now we have to wait for the whole day for any work," He alleged further.

EPB introduced a system that it would receive applications and documents till 12 ev- every day and those concerned would get the work done after 3 pm.

Another commercial officer said, "Garments export is an urgent work and if we cannot get our work done timely, the factories will fail to export their products."

When contacted, Director General of EPB Textile Cell Abdur Razzaque said that the present system was introduced to check visa forgery and other corrupt practices in garments export.

None can now enter the office and establish links with any official to take 'undue advantage', he said. "It will also expedite EPB service."

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Garment employees wave files and papers in front of the closed gate of the EPB's Textile Cell at Motijheel in an attempt to draw attention of the officials of the cell to get things done. — Star photo by Sk Enamul Haque