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## India downs Pak patrol plane

Tension mounts as New Delhi puts navy, military on high alert

ISLAMABAD, Aug 10: The Indian Air Force today shot down a Pakistani naval patrol aircraft, killing all 16 navy personnel on board and sparking furious protests from the Pakistan government, reports AFP.

Pakistan accused India of carrying out a "cowardly act" while the Indian authorities said the plane had been shot down by a MIG-21 fighter after it violated Indian air space.

The incident again heightened tensions between the South Asian rivals, who have fought three wars since independence in 1947 and now both have nuclear weapons.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister

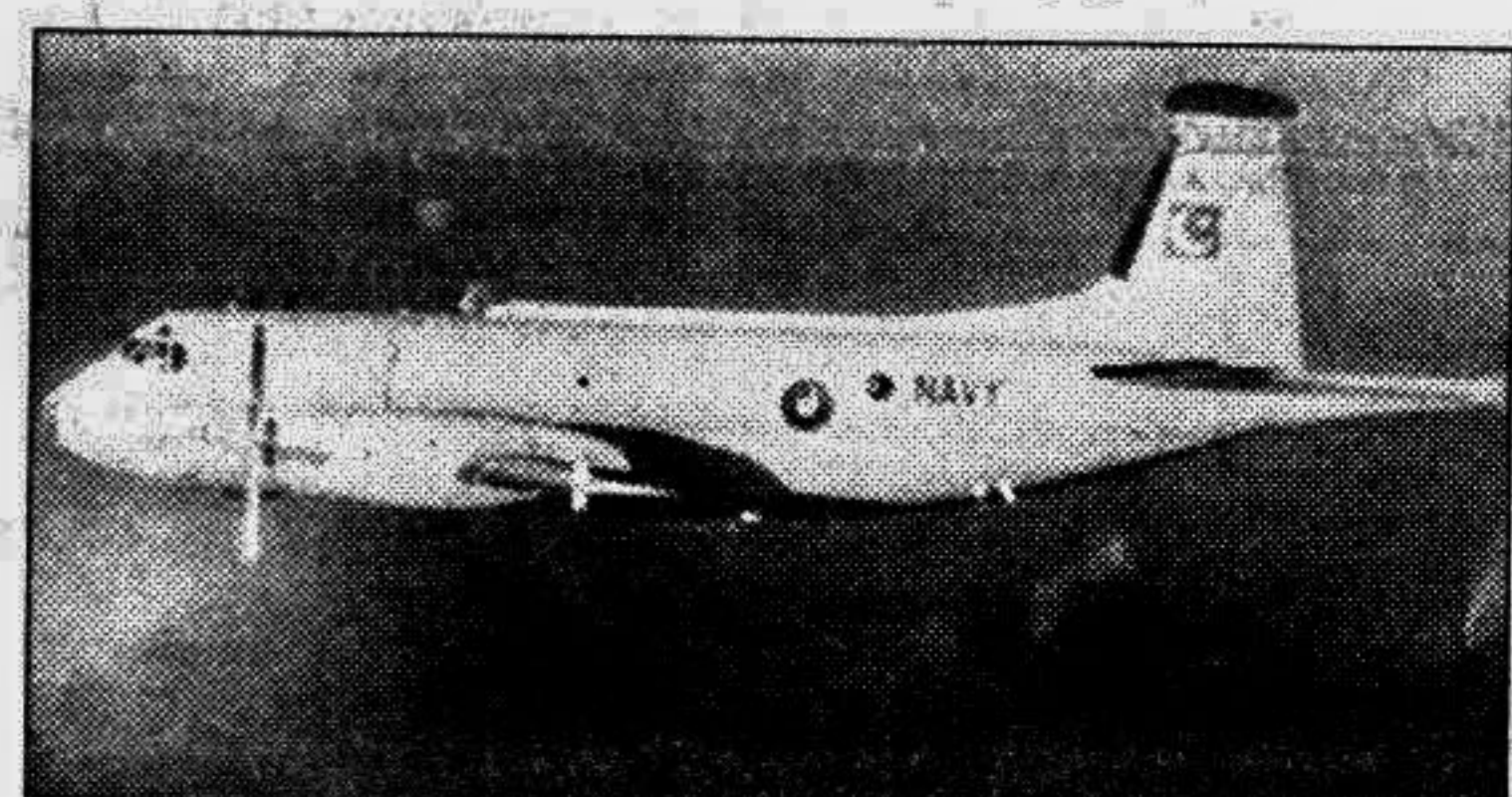
Sartaj Aziz said the "cold-blooded murder" of 16 innocent people "deserves strong condemnation by the international community."

"Pakistan reserves the right to make an appropriate response in self-defence," he added.

Aziz said responsibility for the "wanton and cowardly" act "rests squarely with India."

In New Delhi, Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes said the "whole of the western military sector" had been placed on alert following the incident. The Press Trust of India quoted highly placed naval sources as saying the navy had

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A French-made Breguet Atlantique marine patrol aircraft of Pakistan Air Force. An Indian jet fighter shot down a similar aircraft yesterday that had allegedly violated Indian airspace in India's western state of Gujarat.

— AFP photo



How many miles to go?

Environment minister Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, at the Save the Buriganga workshop yesterday, promised to draw the attention of the prime minister to the problem and pay personal attention to the cause. (Inset) A part of the blueprint presented by professionals shows the Ahsan Manjil segment of the riverbank.

—Star photo

## BB deadline to catch defaulters

By Inam Ahmed

The Bangladesh Bank has set a deadline till December 31 for nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) and development financial institutions (DFIs) to realise loans from each of their top 50 defaulters or to file cases against them.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Bangladesh Bank Governor and chief executives of eight NCBs and DFIs yesterday.

According to meeting sources, the banks have been

asked to make lists of their 50 top defaulters and gear up the special drive to realise the stuck up loans through readjustment and rescheduling or to file cases by the deadline.

The meeting also discussed the lengthy legal procedure against defaulters and observed that the banks must strengthen their legal wings for quick settlement of cases.

It was suggested in the meeting that each bank should ap-

point a senior legal expert, preferably a retired district judge with fame, to advise banks on legal battles.

At the same time, the banks should send one of their officials to courts on the dates of hearing.

Very recently, the Dhaka District Judge sent a letter to Bangladesh Bank that he did not find any lawyer of a DFI on the day of hearing of a case.

Under such circumstances,

the defaulters often get stay orders and keep their cases pending for indefinite period.

According to sources, over one lakh cases were filed by the eight NCBs and DFIs in different courts regarding loan recovery in the last three years.

Of these, only 58,225 cases involving Tk 1317 crore have been decreed in favour of the eight institutions. However, the real recovery rate is very slim, only Tk 187 cr.

## EC asks BNP leaders to back claim, tells two MPs to defend

By Staff Correspondent

The Election Commission yesterday issued separate letters to Deputy Leader of the Opposition in parliament Professor Badruddoza Chowdhury and opposition chief whip Khondaker Delwar Hossain, asking

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## Of tender and terror

JU VC blames anti-Liberation group for campus turmoil

By Gobinda Bar

The recent return of the "Rapist Group" belonging to the ruling party backed Bangladesh Chhatra League to the university, after about a year, is a fall-out of the JU senate election of July 29, vice chancellor of Jahangirnagar University (JU) Prof Alauddin Ahmed feels.

This (capturing of halls) was part of a blueprint of a vested quarter in the university to destabilise the entire situation and put me in a predicament.

"Those who lost (the elections) are trying to avenge their defeat in many ways," the VC said refusing to further elaborate.

"The recent incident of capturing halls by the so-called 'rapist group' has been masterminded by an influential person in the ruling party, in connivance with a vested interest group of teachers on the campus," Prof Alauddin told The

Daily Star in an interview recently.

"Tender is also a cause behind the capture of halls," the VC said, adding, "They did it hurriedly because they thought that we might take a decision on the Tk 2.71 crore tender for construction of the new Arts Faculty building soon."

The VC, however, claimed that the tender was not opened and the process may take some two more

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## Citizens' cry

The anarchic abuse of the old river leads concerned citizens to ask for prompt policy action

By Staff Correspondent

Eminent citizens have strongly underscored the urgency to save the river Buriganga from rapid encroachment and pollution.

The citizens were addressing a workshop organised by The Daily Star and Chetona, a forum of professionals which include architects, town planners and environment engineers at the British Council Auditorium yesterday.

Minister, Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, in her speech as the chief guest, personally committed to take up the issue and solve the Buriganga problem.

"We already have a national environment committee involving all the ministries concerned and another sub-committee headed by me that is looking into the environmental problem. I will soon convene another meeting to take im-

### Save the Buriganga

Four teams of Chetona's professionals presented the audience with study reports that included plans of how the Buriganga banks could look like when a planned approach to the problem is adopted. They also presented a report on the actual situation of the river regarding its water quality and physical encroachment.

Environment and Forest

mediate steps for saving Buriganga," the environment minister said.

Sajeda Chowdhury said several ministries and departments were involved in the government's Save Buriganga drive but recently the Water Resources Ministry has been entrusted with the responsibility to look after the river.

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## Bargain for access to Nepal, Bhutan

Commerce committee chief on transshipment

By Nurul Kabir

Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Commerce Dewan Farid Gazi does not find any problem in giving India facilities for transshipment of goods through Bangladesh routes. But he strongly believes that Bangladesh has to effectively bargain for transit to Nepal and Bhutan through India.

Farid Gazi MP, a 76-year-old leader of the ruling Awami League, made the observations in an exclusive interview with The Daily Star on Monday.

"With the change in world economic order, Bangladesh can not, and also should not, remain isolated from neighbouring India," Gazi said. "What is important is that you have to secure your interests while maintaining good relations with neighbours. Bangladesh will be financially benefited by giving India the proposed facilities."

However, he is not aware of any study on the possible financial gain or loss from the proposed transshipment. "Any way, before entering into an agreement, we need to carry out effective studies to assess the possible results of such an agreement," he said.

When his attention was drawn to opposition BNP's reluctance to allow transshipment facilities to India, the ruling party leader said it is inconsistent with the principles of free market economy followed by the party. "On top of that, all such agreements were signed with India twice, once in 1980 and again in 1993, when BNP was in power."

Reminded that the government of Khaleda Zia had taken a regional approach, not just bi-

lateral, in entering 'such agreements' with India, Gazi said: "The government of Sheikh Hasina has not yet signed any agreement. It is too early to say that the present government would not take a regional approach on the issue. We must bargain for transit to Nepal and Bhutan through India."

Replying to another question, Farid Gazi said, "If you want good relations with neighbours, you have to build it up on the basis of 'give and take' principles. Apart from signing the 'Ganges Water Sharing Treaty' with us, India has helped us solve the Chittagong Hill Tracts problem. Now that India has asked for transshipment facilities, we should be sympathetic to it."

Asked whether giving transshipment facilities would affect our potential market in the north eastern part of India, which was utilised under the proposed Development Quadrangle, Gazi said: "It may affect our possible business to some extent."

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## 5,000 shanties go down

By Staff Correspondent

At least five thousand unauthorised shanties and shops on both sides of the rail track from Kamapur to Maghbazar were removed yesterday.

Some 25,000 people were rendered homeless when the slums were bulldozed by police backed by Armed Police and BDR in presence of railway officials.

The drive to remove slums began on Sunday on orders from the home minister to free the city from slum-based crimes after police constable Mohsin of Riot Control Division was shot dead in an attack

on the Gopibagh police camp allegedly by some slum dwellers on Friday.

Yesterday's operation began in the morning and continued till evening. The removed slums include Khilgaon Bagicha Slum, City Law College Slum, Comilla Slum, Biswa Road Slum, Wireless Gate Slum and shops under Malibagh Rail Crossing Small Vendors Cooperative.

Several slum dwellers at the ware-less slum claimed that the government has ignored them by throwing them out from their habitations during the rainy season. Thousands of people now have got no roof over their heads, moaned the squatters.

The slum dwellers lamented that they were not given any time to find out alternative

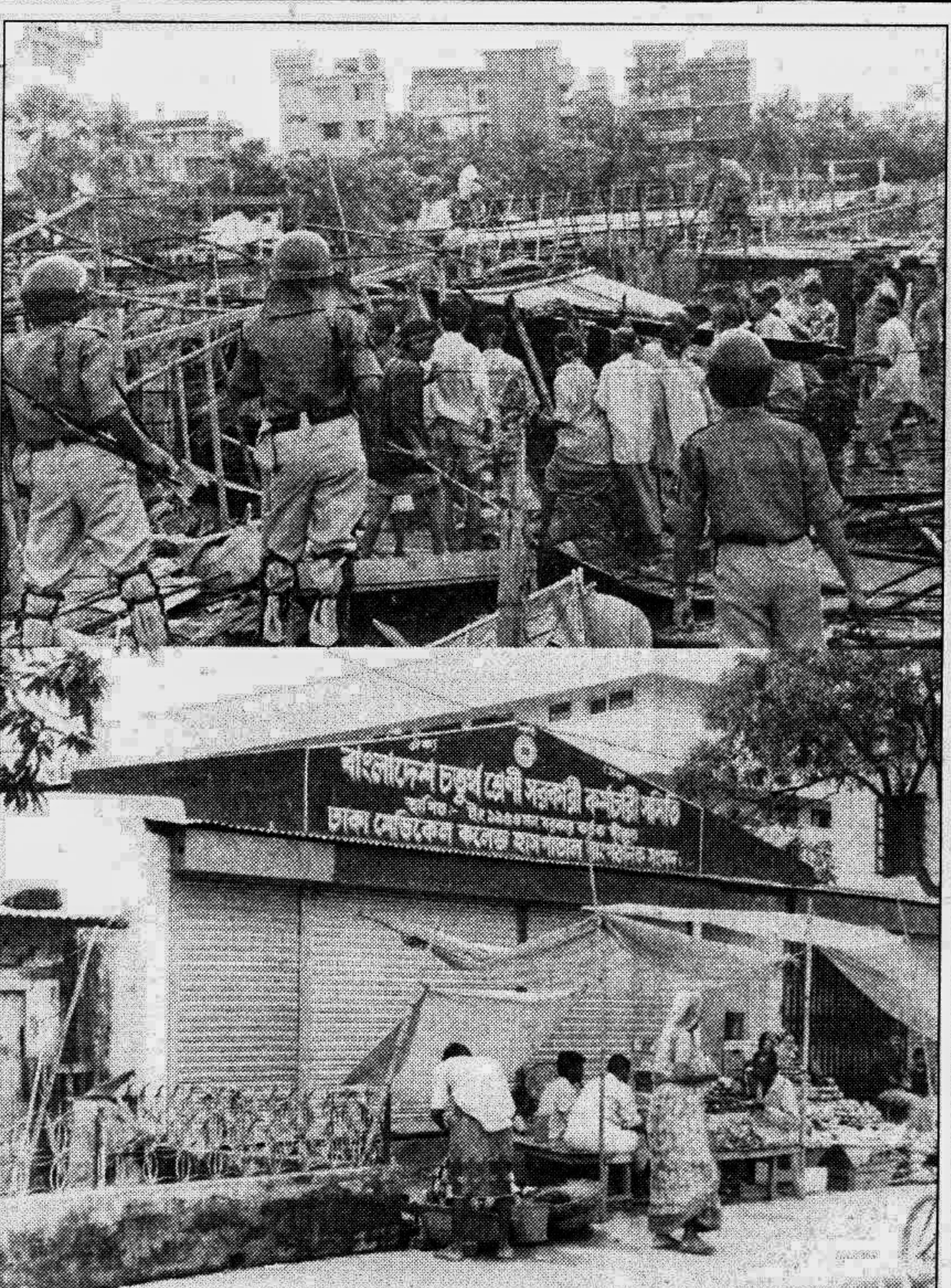
shelters.

"We could arrange shelters if we were given two months' time. But, it was our bad luck that blowing of whistles was enough to evict us," said Fazila at the Khilgaon Bagicha Slum.

Rahima of City Law College Slum acknowledged that narcotics traders used to take refuge at slums. But police failed to nab them and took their wrath on us, she alleged. "Passing nights under the open sky in this big city is a real danger. Who will protect us now," said another woman.

"We were so important before the election. Many commitments were made before the present government came to power. It is our reward for supporting them", Hawa Bibi said at the Wireless Gate Slum.

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How rational a raze?

Police yesterday demolished slums at Malibagh (top), and the Dhaka Medical College Hospital allows its Class Four employees to construct an office that has turned into a sidewalk market (above).

—Star photos by A K M Mohsin and Anisur Rahman

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#### Prayer Timings

August 11		
	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

Donors concerned, NGOs demonstrate

Star Report

Bangladesh's development partners yesterday expressed grave concern over removal of slums in the city, BBC reported.

However, they are yet to give an "official statement" over the issue.

World Bank's Country Director Frederick P. Temple told BBC that they were concerned about it and that the matter was discussed among the development partners.

Temple said the eviction of slum dwellers is against the process for development of the city.

The UNDP representative in Dhaka has also expressed concern over the issue, BBC said.

Meanwhile, activists of some NGOs staged demonstrations at some demolished slums in the city against the government move.

Noted lawyer Dr Kamal Hossain told the BBC that a case will be filed against the eviction without prior notice.

PM orders rehabilitation, forms body

The government has constituted a 13-member committee headed by the Home Minister to rehabilitate the slum dwellers evicted from government lands occupied illegally, reports BSS.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has sanctioned Taka five crore from her Relief and Welfare Fund to help implement the rehabilitation process in phases.

The decision was taken to curb slum-based crimes and anti-social activities. It was also imperative to take possession of the government land from the illegal occupants for implementation of the development projects.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has directed the authorities concerned to consider the humanitarian aspects of the affected slum dwellers during the implementation of the programme.

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