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Tofail blasts Maj (Retd) Hafiz for making false allegation

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed yesterday denied the allegation of torture on BNP workers and terrorist activities by ruling party members at Lalmoohan and Tazumuddin thanas of Bhola district, reports UNB.

Talking to newsmen at his Commerce Ministry chamber, he blasted BNP lawmaker Maj (Retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed for making the "false" allegation which, he said, was intended to undermine him.

"Bhola is among the most peaceful districts in Bangladesh. There is no violence over tenders for development work," Tofail said. He, however, condemned the incident of pouring acid on the daughter of a UP chairman. "It was not a political incident, it is now under trial," he said.

Ramaganj union parishad chairman Ahsan Ullah Selim at a press conference in Dhaka on Monday blamed ruling party activists for repression on him and his family as he refused to join Awami League.

He alleged that his school-going married daughter Sumi was acid-burnt by ruling party activists while he and his minor son were charged with various false cases.

BNP MP from Bhola, Maj (Retd.) Hafiz Uddin Ahmed, who was also present at the press conference, charged Awami League workers with resorting to violence in his constituency comprising Lalmoohan and Tazumuddin thanas.

Refuting all allegations, Tofail said UP Chairman Selim, whom Maj Hafiz is supporting now, had been accused in a lot of cases during BNP rule and the period of caretaker government. Even he was removed from his position of UP chairman during BNP time, Tofail said.

Tofail, who is also an MP from Bhola, said local people want him to contest from Lalmoohan-Tazumuddin constituency, which might have promoted Maj (Retd.) Hafiz to make blanket complaints against Awami League, involving his name.

He rather accused Maj (Retd) Hafiz of harbouring terrorists in Tazumuddin thana in 1993 and the attack on Lalmoohan thana during a BNP-sponsored hartal on November 9 last year.

Fresh areas flooded in 3 districts
From Our Correspondent
RAJSHAHI, Aug 18: New areas in Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj and Naogaon districts went under water today as the Padma, the Mohananda and the Atrai rivers continued to rise.

The Mohananda was flowing 44 cm above its danger level. Flood waters have entered 57 villages in Chapainawabganj Sadar thana and Char Alatali, Char Bagdanga, Sundarpur, Narayanpur, Ashaujuipur and some villages in Bholahat thana.

Unofficial sources said that several thousand acres of land with standing crops had been inundated. Several hundred people have taken shelter in schools and roads.

A part of the T Groin and the Rajshahi Town Protection Embankment have been eroded by strong currents of the Padma. Erosion took serious turn and hit Bulanpur, Shrirampur, Haripur, Fultola, Talaimari, Baje Kazla, Barakuthi, Dashmari and Shyanpur.

Some areas of Tanore and Bagmara thana have been submerged as the Baranai river rose. Some new areas of char lands in Godagari, Poba, Bagha and Charshat thanas have also been submerged.

The Padma was flowing 47cm below the danger level today.

In Naogaon, the Atrai flooded fresh areas in Manda, Atrai and Raninagar thanas.

Listed terrorist arrested in Khulna
From Staff Correspondent
KHULNA, Aug 18: Khan Ibne Zaman, former joint secretary of City Awami League and one of the listed terrorists was arrested by Khulna police from Shaheed Haidi Park at about 10 pm on Tuesday.

According to police, Zaman was wanted in three sensational murder cases, including the murders of labour leader F M Sirajul Haq and Chhatra League leader Anwar Hossain Kamal.



Mukhtijodha midfielder Joy (L) under pressure from Mohammedan midfielder Jahangir (R) during their Keya Premier Division football league clash yesterday. — Star photo

MSC still afloat, but barely

Mohammedan Sporting survived a second-half Mukhtijodha onslaught to run away with a crucial point as the repeat 'super four' clash of the Keya Premier Football League between the two title contenders ended in a goal-less draw at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

A win would have put holders Mukhtijodha in a strong position. The all reds, hot on the heels of their famous 4-1 triumph over the black and whites in the previous match, certainly played for one. But they had to eventually settle for a draw in the face of Mohammedan custodian Poir's amazing agility. He was simply unbeatable under the bar.

The former national goalie was a pale shadow of his brilliant self throughout the league. But, at the check-full big bowl under lights, Poir made some spectacular saves to keep his side afloat at the top of the table.

The outcome, however, came as a blessing for Abahani, who for the first time in the league captured the second position pushing Mukhtijodha to third place. Mohammedan still maintained the solo lead, but the misfortune that hit the popular outfit since the humiliating defeat to Mukhtijodha continued unabated as they capitulated six of their eight-point

lead, which they enjoyed over their arch rivals Abahani at the end of the first phase.

Mohammedan may still relish some solace for keeping Mukhtijodha at bay, but it is going to be difficult times ahead for the black and whites when the final phase of the 'super four' begins after the Bangabandhu Cup.

Although the first half of the second match of the day produced nothing noteworthy apart from some physical display by both sides, Mukhtijodha came out firing all their cylinders after the break, pushing Mohammedan to the wall.

With a roving and relentless midfielder Joy showing up in every part of the ground and Alieu, one of the two Nigerian recruits of Mukhtijodha, coming up with sudden thunderous shots, the Mohammedan defence was left in total disarray.

But Poir, at the twilight of his career, was the lone man denying surrendering in the face of some terrific Mukhtijodha assaults.

The experienced custodian tipped an Alieu left-side cross over the bar in the 50th minute

before a lurking Nakib could do any damage. Poir came to his side's rescue again two minutes later when he fisted away a pile driver from Alieu that was unleashed from the edge of the box.

Poir was again in the thick of things twelve minutes later when he clung on to a close-range Jewel Rana shot from a goalmouth scramble.

Although Poir was unwilling to allow an inch, Masud Rana with a low cross from the left beat him once three minutes away from the final whistle. But substitute Tushar failed to tap the ball into the empty net, much to the horror of his teammates.

Although the Mohammedan defence did a commendable job to withstand the relentless Mukhtijodha aggression, the attacking trio of Mohammedan — Alfaz, Andre and Robert — were totally out of touch. While Alfaz, the prolific national striker, continued his dismal performance since recovering from flu, the two newly recruited Uzbek forwards have upset their rhythm more than

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Team	Rank	M	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mohammedan	1	15	10	3	2	20	9	33
Abahani KC	2nd	15	9	4	2	23	9	31
Mukhtijodha	3rd	15	9	3	3	30	14	30
Arambagh	4th	15	4	3	8	16	25	15



These people, claiming themselves to be evicted slum dwellers, occupied a part of the Osmany Udyan yesterday. They are organised under the banner of Bangladesh Bastuhara Samity, whose address is stated to be the same as the Awami League central office. — Star photo

Slum people 'occupy' Udyan

From Page 1
no place to live or a shelter to escape the monsoon.

As he spoke the newly arrived 'visitors' to the park were competing with each other to earmark their slots with ropes between the rows of trees.

A large posse of BDR and riot police who had been relaxing nearby did not intervene.

The new invasion of the park coming after last year's brief occupation of 'hawkers' who had been given places to raise a makeshift market raises question about the ultimate fate of the park.

When the hawkers' invasion was published in newspapers with concern about the park the city corporation reluctantly drove them out.

ing 'ownership' of the park tried to occupy it. But they too had to leave.

Finally the government decided to take-over the park to construct a 5,000 seat convention centre for the Non-Aligned Summit meet scheduled in June 2001.

It came under criticism from environmentalists, intellectuals and citizens, fearing the loss of the only green space between the old and the new Dhaka.

As they staged protests and petitioned the government to shift the NAM convention site elsewhere, three government organisations quietly moved in to lay claim on the north-western side.

The police planted red flags marking an area for expansion of their control room located on the eastern side near the Link Road of the Secretariat.

The WASA entered with their claim of having a reservoir for the fire brigade. Titus Gas Company has started work for raising a sub-station for gas supplies.

But none of them paid any attention to the slum and the vacant portions on the north-

ern and western side where the Railway still retains its hold behind its headquarter.

The Railway however, failed to take care of its abandoned Fulbaria station. By a magic touch property like 'super markets' are emerging besides the 'Bangabazar', a makeshift market for garments' industry rejects.

'Proper use of gas resources can make Bangladesh middle income country by 2020'

By Staff Correspondent
Bangladesh will emerge as a middle income country by the year 2020 if it makes proper use of its gas resources.

This was stated by Dan Mozena, Counsellor for Political and Economic Affairs of the US Embassy in Dhaka, at a talk on "US-Bangladesh Relations" yesterday.

Mozena said more US investment in Bangladesh depends on whether a conducive atmosphere is ensured. Referring to former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's comment, he said Bangladesh is not an "international basket" and it's a challenge before the country to build it up using natural gas.

The talk held at the hotel La Vinci was organised by APEC-Bangladesh Friendship Society. Terming the US-Bangladesh relations as "absolutely excellent," he said "we want stability, peace, democracy and market economy in Bangladesh."

He said US President Bill Clinton is expected to visit Bangladesh shortly but no date has yet been fixed.

"It depends on the security and the diplomatic situation in the Sub-continent," he said. Editor of Holiday Enayullah Khan who attended the talk as a designated discussant, emphasised on technology transfer and more technological co-operation between Bangladesh and the USA. He said that present brand of market economy would exert 'tremendous negative impact' on Bangladesh economy.

DG Bangla Academy Prof Syed Anwar Hossain, who also attended as a speaker, termed the US-Bangladesh relations as 'asymmetric'.

Among others Major General Ibrahim Bir Pratik, Col (ret) Faruk Khan MP, journalist Anwarul Haque and Rashed Maqsood Khan attended the discussion. Tanvir Nawaz Khan, president of APEC-Bangladesh Friendship Society, moderated the programme while Saidul Alam, general secretary of the organisation and Masud Manir, director of protocol of the Foreign Ministry and a secretary of the organisation were also present.

Several hundred join sit-in at Rajshahi

From Our Correspondent
RAJSHAH, Aug 18: Several hundred people today staged a sit-in at the C&B Crossing in the city for five hours from 10 am to 3 pm.

Rajshahi Committee for Resistance to Transfer of O&M Division (RCRTO&MD) organised the demonstration to press home its five-point demands. The demands include cancellation of transfer order of the Operation & Maintenance (O&M) Division-2 of Bangladesh Water Development Board from Rajshahi, complete renovation of Rajshahi Town Protection Embankment, establishment of a new O&M Division at Chapainawabganj district headquarters, taking up Northern Rajshahi Irrigation Project and launching of an Internet Server in Rajshahi.

BNP leaders submit memo to Indian Dy HC at Rajshahi
From Our Correspondent
RAJSHAH, Aug 18: Rajshahi city and district BNP leaders submitted a memorandum to the Deputy High Commissioner of India at Rajshahi this noon.

In the memorandum, BNP leaders protested 'attacks' by the Indian Border Security Forces (BSF) on some villages in Godagari thana in the district in the recent days.

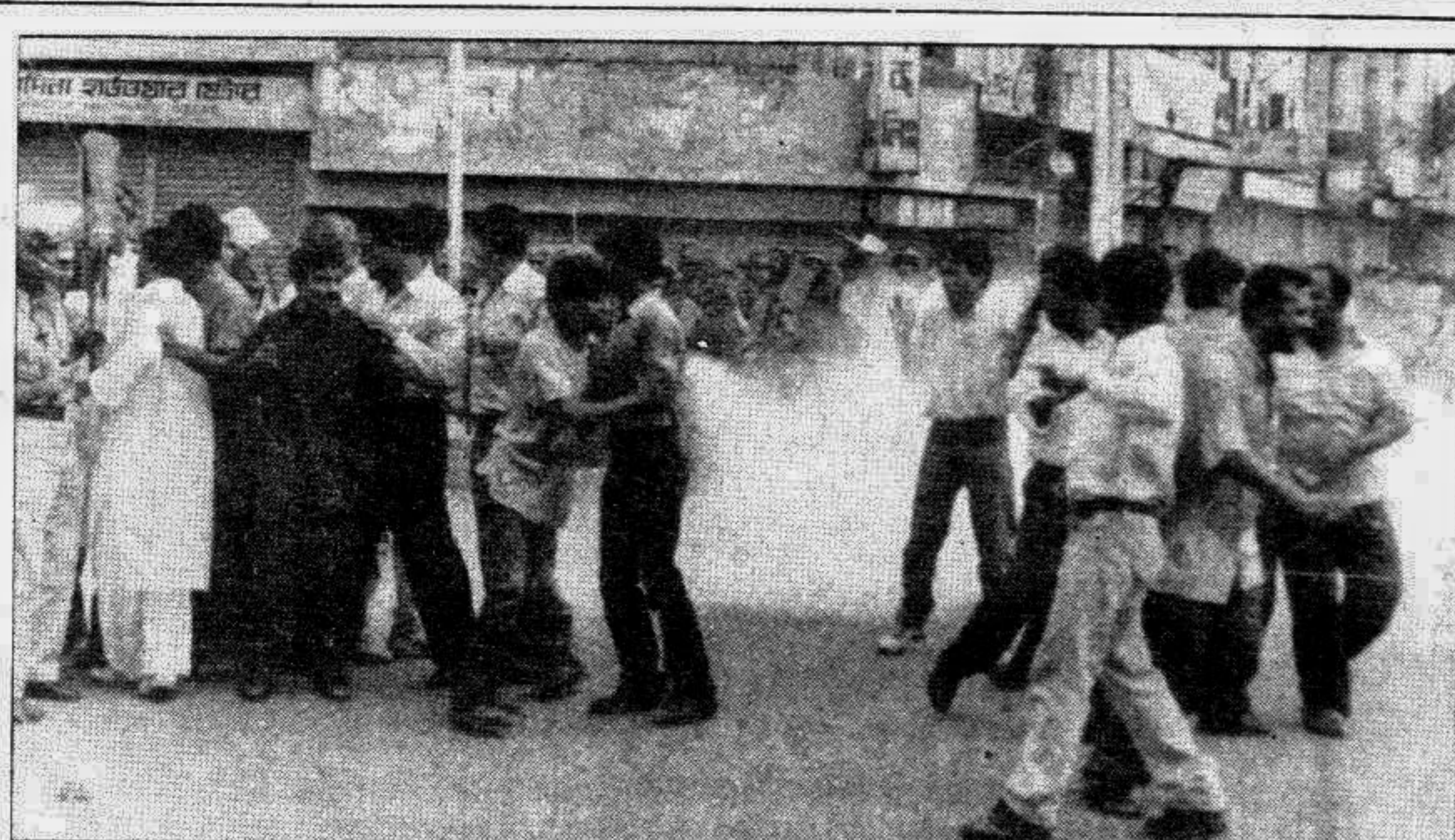
They urged the Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee to take step to stop the aggressive activities of the BSF for maintaining good neighbourliness between the peoples of the two countries.

Rajshahi city mayor Mijanur Rahman Minu, Advocate Ekhlauque Hossain, president of Rajshahi city unit, Advocate Quamrul Monir, general secretary of the district unit were among the signatories to the memorandum.

Bangladeshis in Ankara safe
All Bangladeshis living in the Turkish capital Ankara and its adjoining areas, which were rattled by a earthquake early Tuesday, are safe, reports UNB.

The Foreign Ministry has kept close contact with Bangladesh Mission in Ankara to know the condition of expatriate Bangladeshis, an official handout said yesterday.

So far, no report of any death or injury was received and the Ministry continues its effort to know the condition of all Bangladeshis living in Turkey, the handout added.



Some people allegedly threw bombs on a BNP procession, bound for the Deputy Commissioner's Office, from a rooftop of a building near the Royshahib Bazar crossing in the city. — Star photo

Sonia makes electoral debut, takes on Sushma Swaraj

From Pallab Bhattacharya
NEW DELHI, Aug 18: More than a year after taking the plunge into front stage politics, Sonia Gandhi today made her maiden foray into electoral battle when she filed her nomination for next month's general elections.

Ending weeks of suspense over the choice of her constituency, Sonia Gandhi flew to Bellary, the constituency in the southern state of Karnataka which has been a strong-hold of her Congress Party for over half a century, and filed four sets of nomination papers.

Bellary is considered in Congress circles as a "safe" seat which has been won by the party nominee in all elections since 1952.

Sonia Gandhi, the 51-year-old widow of India's former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, will face senior BJP leader Sushma Swaraj who also filed her nominations from Bellary, setting the stage for what promises to be a high-voltage battle of ballots in this otherwise placid constituency.

Congress had kept the final choice of Sonia Gandhi's constituency a closely-guarded secret and the party had even fielded a state-level leader for contest in Bellary for seeking re-election.

As news of Sonia's nomination spread, Congress activists broke into celebrations and exploded crackers in front of party headquarters of Karnataka state in its capital city Bangalore.

Meanwhile, senior Congress leader K Natwar Singh today indicated that Sonia Gandhi might contest also from Amethi constituency in Uttar Pradesh state in north India.

Amethi is considered a pocket-borough of the Nehru-

elections on October 3, there is time till September 10 for Sonia Gandhi to file her nomination papers from there, if she so wants.

Meanwhile, Sonia, in an interview to a private television network, said she would remain in politics irrespective of the coming parliamentary election results. She said her son Rahul and daughter Priyanka were "not interested" to be active in politics.

JP leader murder: 4 held

Hartal called in Khulna today

From Staff Correspondent
KHULNA, Aug 18: Khulna district and city units of Jatiya Party have jointly called a half-day hartal in Khulna tomorrow protesting murder of its senior vice president and UP chairman Abul Hossain Howlader.

Howlader was gunned down by unidentified assailants Monday night at Palerhat office of the Rupsha Thana Rice Mill and Brickfield Workers' Union.

Abul Kalam Howlader, younger brother of the deceased filed a case on Tuesday with Rupsha thana court against owners of three rice mills and two brickfields for the murder.

It has been stated in the FIR that the accused, threatened to kill Abul Hossain on Monday morning when he was organising a procession at Srialatala union to press home certain demands of the workers.

The UP chairman was killed ten hours after he led the procession that paraded main streets of Rupsha thana and Khulna city.

Meanwhile, police today arrested four persons for their alleged involvement in the murder.

They are Jamal Khan, Pear Ali, Bakibillah and Islam Shaikh.

BDR personnel have been called out to assist police to avert further violence in the Rupsha area.

UNB adds: Protesting killing of Abul Hossain Howlader, the supporters damaged shops and vehicles in Rupsha area for the second day today.

The protesters, mostly rice union to press home certain demands of the workers.

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