

What's on today.....

Fassbinder retrospective: Zahir Raihan Film Society in association with Short Film Forum will screen a movie by filmmaker Rainer Werner Fassbinder. The film is *Berlin Alexanderplatz I*. Venue: Goethe Institut. Time: 10.00 am.

Photography exhibition: The 2nd solo photography exhibition of Shakur Majid titled 'Traveller's Clicks' will be inaugurated. Chief guest: Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury. Speaker: Jatiya Sangsad. Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 5.00 pm. The exhibition will remain open daily from 9.00 am-12.00 noon and 5.00 pm-8.00 pm.

Film show: Two French movies *An Indian in City* and *Summer Light* will be screened. Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 11.00 am and 4.00 pm respectively.

Launching ceremony: The launching ceremony of 'Select Writings and Speeches of Syed Badruddin' will be held. Organiser: Syed Badruddin Charitable Trust. Venue: VIP Lounge of Jatiya Press Club. Time: 4.45 pm.

Classical music: The Information and Cultural Wing of the High Commission of India will hold a presentation of classical music by Dr Harun-Ar-Rashid. Venue: Indian Cultural Centre auditorium, Dhanmondi. Time: 6.30 pm.

Musical presentation: Bangladesh Rabindra Sangeet Shilpi Sangstha will begin a two-day long programme on Rabindra Sangeet as part of *Baishak Srobon* celebrations. The Sangeet Chittagong branch members will present songs today. Venue: Shishu Academy auditorium. Time: 7.00 pm.

Graduation ceremony: The graduation ceremony of the 31st batch of MBA and 3rd batch of BBA of the Institute of Business Administration (IBA) of the Dhaka University will be held. Venue: TSC auditorium on DU campus. Time: 4.00 pm.

..... and tomorrow

Fassbinder retrospective: Zahir Raihan Film Society in association with Short Film Forum will screen a movie by filmmaker Rainer Werner Fassbinder. The film is *Berlin Alexanderplatz II*. Venue: Goethe Institut. Time: 10.00 am.

Memorial lecture: Bangladesh Academy of Sciences will hold the 1st Dr MO Ghani Memorial lecture. Chief guest: President Shahabuddin Ahmed, special guest: Lt General Noor Uddin Khan psc (ret). Minister for Science and Technology. Venue: Islamic Development Bank Bhawan auditorium. Time: 10.00 am.

BCCEMCC meeting: Bangladesh-China Cultural, Economic and Mass Communication Centre BCCEMCC will hold a discussion meeting on 'Peaceful Reunification of Taiwan to Motherland'. Venue: Banquet Hall of Hotel Abokash, Mohakhali. Time: 5.00 pm.

Weather

Thundershowers likely

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at a few places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and at one or two places over Dhaka, Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions with moderately heavy falls over Chittagong and Barisal divisions till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

No appreciable change in day temperature is expected over the country during the period, said MT office.

Rainfall may increase in the subsequent two days, it added. Country's highest temperature yesterday was recorded 33.3 degree Celsius at Sylhet and the lowest 24.4 degrees at Chittagong.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6.28 pm and rises tomorrow at 5.36 am.

Maximum and minimum temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius	Humidity in percentage
	Max	Min
Dhaka	32.2	26.2
Chittagong	31.2	24.4
Rajshahi	32.4	26.4
Khulna	32.6	26.6
Barisal	31.6	25.6
Sylhet	33.3	25.0
Cox's Bazar	30.4	25.0



Eviction hearing adjourned till Aug 23

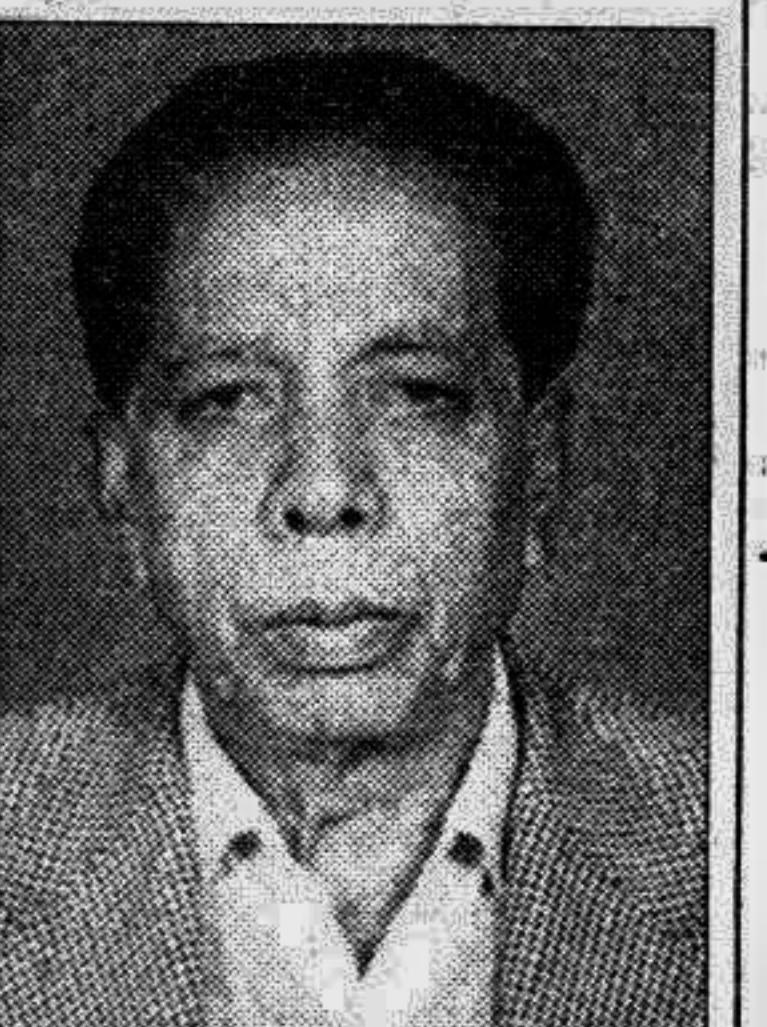
The hearing of the writ petition challenging the eviction of the slum dwellers was adjourned till August 23, 1999 following shifting of the case to another bench, reports BSS.

The court directed that the injunction issued earlier by another Division Bench upon the government will remain in force till August 23, 1999.

The case came up for hearing before a bench comprising Justice K M Hasan and Justice Mohammad Abdul Quddus yesterday but the court declined to hear the same as it felt embarrassed. The matter was sent to the Chief Justice to constitute another bench.

The Chief Justice then constituted a bench comprising Justice Mohammad Fazlul Karim and Justice Mohammad Ali Azgar Khan to hear the matter. The counsel of the petitioners Dr Kamal Hossain placed the contention of the petition before the newly-constituted court.

Attorney General (AG) Mahmudul Islam was advised to file the affidavit-in-opposition (reply) for the government when the matter will be taken up on Monday next.

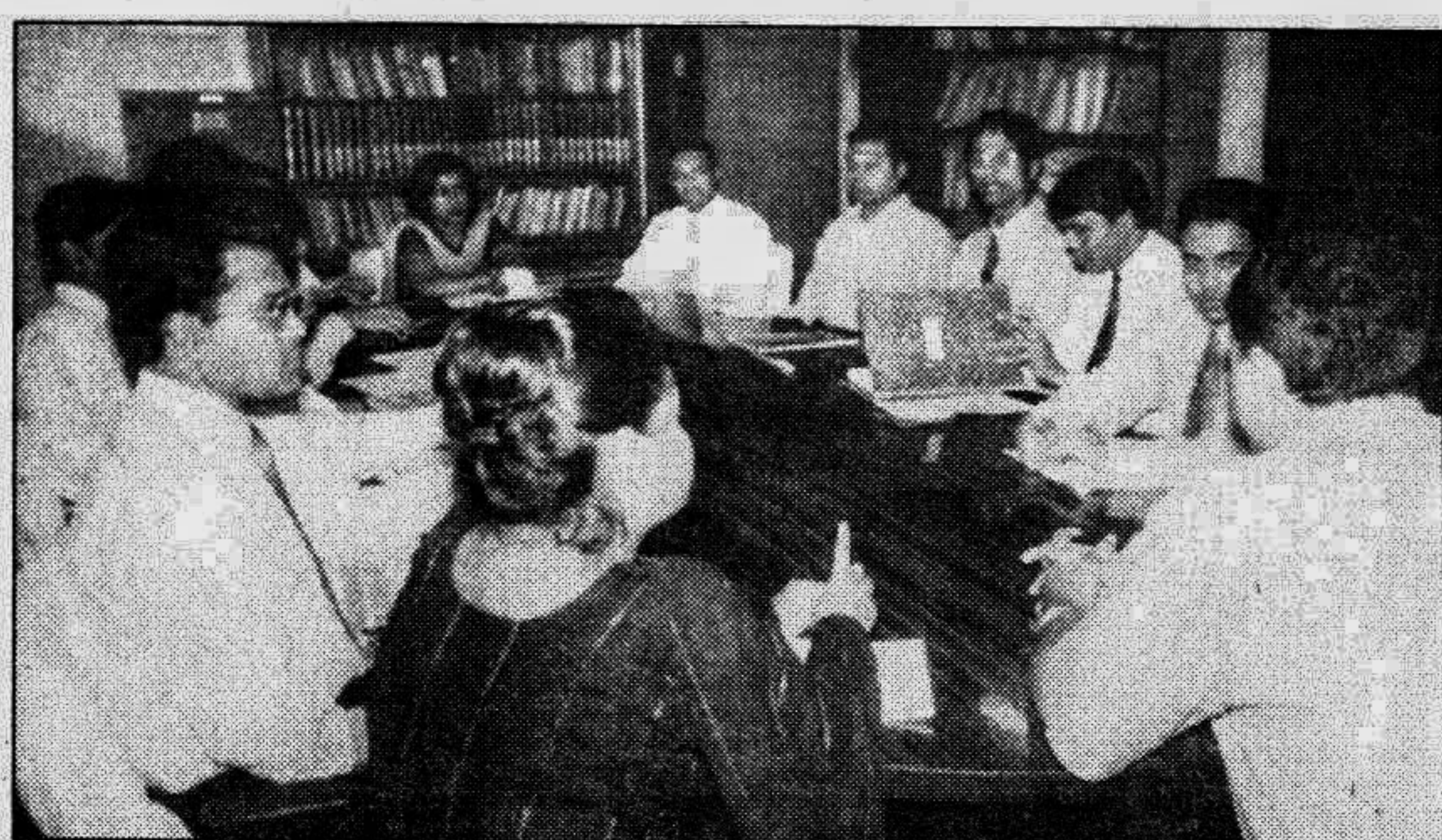


Death anniversary

The sixth death anniversary of A Hakim Khan will be observed tomorrow by various socio-cultural organisations, says a press release.

Milad mahfil and *qurankhwan* has also been arranged to mark the day.

Hakim Khan was a renowned social reformer of village Rajpara, PS Nawabgonj, Dhaka and founder of M/s. Hakim Motors.



The participants of a roundtable on Business Education in Bangladesh held at the Conference Room of The Daily Star yesterday. Story on page 12. —Star photo

3 die on Dhaka-Ctg highway

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Aug 19: At least three people were killed and six others injured three of them critically when a truck skidded to a road side ditch on Dhaka-Chittagong highway at Sanarpur area in Siddhirganj thana in the early hours today.

Police sources said the accident occurred when a Dhaka-bound fish-laden truck from Chittagong lost its control and fell into a road side ditch at 1:45 am.

All three died on the spot. The victims could not be identified immediately. All other injured were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where attending doctors stated the condition of three to be critical.

Local people from surrounding areas rushed to the spot and recovered the bodies aided by police who seized the truck. The driver, however, managed to flee.

The bodies of the dead were sent to Narayanganj General Hospital morgue for autopsy. A case was registered with Siddhirganj thana in this connection.

JU probe

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pro-BNP JCD activists. The JCD men were protesting expulsion of their leaders.

A senior teacher and a leader of the JU Teachers' Association (JUTA) told The Daily Star on condition of anonymity that the authorities often suppress the probe body reports when it goes against its interest. "It is not a matter of justice or to unveil the truth, it is a matter of convenience," he said.

Teachers' politics, interest of the teachers in power and of the student body controlling the decision whether any report can be made public and action can be taken as per the reports, he said. Probe bodies are often formed under compulsion but the authorities 'try to forget' about the committee as soon as the situation gets normal, he added.

Demonstration day

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National Mosque. Addressing the rally, the BNP leaders called upon the government to join the current ousting movement and vowed to topple the "autocratic and anti-state" Awami League government soon.

Presided over by city BNP convenor Sadek Hossain Khoka, it was addressed by Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Tariqul Islam, Shahjahan Siraj and Major Gen (Retd) Z A Khan.

The BNP leaders asked government officials and employees, especially police to discharge their duties neutrally and not to carry out any illegal order of the government.

Abdul Matin Chowdhury said the government is conspiring to push the administration into a state of confrontation with the people to stay in power and asked all concerned to remain alert against government's 'evil design'.

Tariqul Islam said BNP while in power never obstructed the opposition parties to carry on with their political activities but the Awami League is killing hundreds of BNP leaders and activists.

Shahjahan Siraj said it has now become mandatory for all citizens of the country to build up a united resistance against the misdeeds of the AL government. "The nation will identify us as betrayers if we fail to resist the AL government," he added.

BNP leaders called upon the people to observe Sunday's countrywide hartal and join other programmes announced by the opposition.

The meeting over, BNP and its front organisations brought out a procession that ended at the central office of the party at Naya Paltan.

Nepali student stabbed RMC foreign students fear for their safety

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Aug 19: Panicked foreign students of Rajshahi Medical College (RMC) have demanded authorities ensure their safety following stabbing of a Nepali student inside the Foreigner's Block of the college.

Some unidentified miscreants stabbed Sumit Rajasuria, a first year MBBS student Wednesday late night at about 3:30 am injuring him seriously.

RMC sources said, the miscreants held Sumit when he went to the adjacent toilet of the hostel and demanded dollars from him. Sumit said that he had no dollars in his possession. The miscreants ordered him to show the rooms of the students who had dollars. Sumit expressed his inability to do so. The miscreants then

snatched away a gold-chain he was wearing and stabbed him. Another student discovered him in the toilet some two hours after the stabbing. He was rushed to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) where he was operated upon. His condition is stated to be critical.

A case was filed in this connection in Rajpara thana.

The foreign students of RMC brought out a procession in the college campus demanding their security and immediate arrest of the miscreants.

RMC principal-in-charge Prof A B Siddique and Rajshahi Metropolitan Police Commissioner Khondoker Shaheb Ali met the foreign students and assured them of taking necessary measures in this regard.

Army withdrawn from Ctg Port

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 19: Army personnel deployed at Chittagong port 11 months ago under a food cell for supervising the discharge of food cargo, have been withdrawn today, port and security sources said. The food cell was set up at Chittagong port after the food last year.

About 500 army and navy personnel were deployed at Chittagong port in two phases.

Sporadic clashes mark JP-called hartal in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Aug 19: Sporadic clashes marked the half-day hartal in the district today.

Khulna district and city units of the Jatiya Party jointly enforced the hartal protesting the murder of their party leader Abul Hossain Howlader.

Howlader was gunned down by unidentified assailants on Monday night.

At least six people were injured in clashes between the activists of Awami League and Jatiya Party during hartal hours at Palahat, Sripalsha and Nailhati under Rupsha thana.

All shops, business establishments and educational institutions remained closed and vehicles were off the roads in the city and Rupsha thana headquarters during hartal.

Evicted squatters

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slum dwellers. The Registrar declined to elaborate further except saying that he would write a letter to the IG of Police. The Ramna thana at 9:45 p.m. said they were aware of the situation in the Supreme Court but were not moving in without receiving orders.

Earlier as the court was pondering the matter, the squatters camping under a huge rain tree adjacent to the Supreme Court Bar Association, held a noisy rally, raising slogans against eviction and demanding rehabilitation.

The rally was addressed, among others, by Lutfor Rahman, Zahida Sultana Jolly and Mannan who said the squatters want resettlement with dignity and criticised both the government and the opposition for showing apathy to slum dwellers.

Earlier the squatters were asked by their leaders to wind up their occupation of the Osmany Udyan as the press photographers had taken their pictures. They forced their way into the Court and also beat a driver and a guard, leaving the driver badly wounded, court

sources said.

At 9 p.m. last night the squatters had been camping on the Eidgah, the National Prayer Ground, on the campus of the court. Some of them had left for other shelters reducing their number, a court guard said.

Saheb Ali, a rickshaw puller said he would not move until he found a shelter as promised by the government. He said he followed the leaders who had promised them that they would be properly rehabilitated.

He said when they arrived on the court premises the guards showed hostility. But some court employees were kind to them providing two drums of water and some 'chira' (dried rice) for the children.

But Asma and Rasheda who were too tired and clutching their children said they do not know what would be their future. They are worrying about a tomorrow without any food or money to care for their children.

Clutching plastic sheets and their little earthly possessions, the women had been wearily looking for a suitable, dry place to bivouac for the night with their children in tow.



Dr Syed Anwar Hossain, Chairman of Bangla Academy, welcomed Prof M Anisuzzaman, the newly-appointed president of the Academy, by presenting bouquet at a simple ceremony yesterday.

Bapex eyes

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blocks and offered BAPEX 20 per cent carried over interest, the highest profit offered to it in the Second Round Bidding. However, Petronas is still pursuing the proposal regarding the two blocks.

Chevron-Texaco, which had jointly proposed to develop Block 9, retaining the risk of oil and gas marketing, has also withdrawn from the bidding.

Only three companies — Shell, Unocal and Maersk — are now holding negotiations with the government. "But signing of any final agreement is still a far cry. There are many vital issues which need to be addressed first," commented a source. "The government has proposed some amendments to the model Production Sharing Contract (PSC) and the oil companies have many things to say about those amendments," he said.

In such a situation, BAPEX has formally requested the government to allow it to explore blocks 3, 6, 8, 9 and 11, the sources said.

"Such a demand is not new," said a source. "Long before the Second Round Bidding, BAPEX had asked the government to award it blocks 3, 6 and 9. It had also requested for Block 11 on different occasions."

"Till announcement of the Second Round Bidding results, Petrobranga had maintained that blocks 9 and 11 would be kept reserved for BAPEX. But in the last moment, the government changed the decisions in favour of opening up all the blocks for foreign oil companies. BAPEX never got any special priority."

The reason for sidetracking BAPEX is lack of finance needed for exploration activities, he added.

Another Bapex story on Back Page

However, many oil companies including Exxon, Unocal and Petronas had officially or unofficially proposed joint ventures with BAPEX following the discovery of Shahbazpur gas field in 1995. Under these joint venture proposals, BAPEX needed very little to invest.

"But no decision-maker was interested in BAPEX," the source added. "For instance, talks on the Unocal-BAPEX joint venture regarding Shahbazpur gas field ended abruptly because the decision-makers wanted Unocal to develop the field on its own. BAPEX was side tracked and Unocal made its Western Region Integrated Project (WRIP) proposal. Now they are all talking about killing the WRIP as it is full of booby traps for Bangladesh."

Such things would not have happened if the BAPEX-Unocal proposal was seriously pursued," the source said. "We surely need investment by foreign oil companies, which can come through PSC and joint ventures. In fact, a joint venture between BAPEX and an oil company would be more financially and technically profitable for both the parties."

Operation cost in such a joint venture would be lower and chances of budget manipulation would be very thin. We could also monitor the foreign oil companies. This is the technique which was applied by Malaysian Petronas Carigali which was a small company like BAPEX back in 1974."

In several sessions in Petrobranga, experts made suggestions including use of share market facilities to raise funds for BAPEX.

"If there's will, there will be ways to improve the financial capability of BAPEX," an official pointed out. "By converting BAPEX into an exploration and production company from its present status of only an exploration company, enough funds can be mobilised to finance its exploration programmes."

PM on clients

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why those who visit such places should not take registration and sign a register book before entering there," she said.

Speaking on the issue of rehabilitation of prostitutes during an exchange of views with the editors of national dailies and the news agencies at her office, the prime minister highlighted the plans and programmes of her government to rescue the unfortunate women from this inhuman trade.

In a lighter vein, the prime minister suggested that there should be a closed circuit TV inside the brothels so that the gentlemen of society who visit the area could be identified.

"We have constitutional obligation to discourage this profession and bring back the brothel inmates to a decent and normal life," she said. Referring to the recent rehabilitation drive of the inmates of Tanbazar and Nimali brothels, she said her government had plans to gradually eradicate this evil from the country.

Sheikh Hasina who looked quite concerned, said why a woman shall have to survive by selling her body. "We must eradicate this profession from social life."

The prime minister was critical of the use of the term 'sex-workers' and said it was not in conformity with the values of our society. "I cannot understand the movement of some women activists who demand that the prostitutes should continue this profession," she said. "Why these activists do not come forward to give a decent life for these unfortunate women," she added.

The prime minister said her government is pledge-bound to stop women trafficking. But how shall we implement the plans if there are brothels in the country, she said, adding her government was worried about the deadly disease AIDS which is spread through prostitution.

Nat'l security at stake

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Reminded that the government of BNP had signed a bilateral agreement with its Indian counterpart in 1980, the former commerce minister said: "We just carried on a particular clause of a bilateral agreement signed between Bangladesh's first commerce minister M R Siddiqui and Indian minister of foreign trade L N Misra on March 28, 1972."

"The clause said that the two governments agree to make mutually beneficial arrangements for the use of their waterways, railways and roadways for commerce between the countries and for passage of goods between two places in one country through the territory of the other."

"We eventually agreed to incorporate the clause into the 1980 agreement, as the clause was just a general expression of intent of the two governments — nothing more than that."

When asked why should his party now oppose the present government if it takes 'specific steps' to materialise the 'general expression of intent', Shamsul Islam said that the proposed step had nothing to do with bilateral interests. "It appears from some previous statements made by some Indian politicians and diplomats that the government of Sheikh Hasina has unilaterally offered India the proposed transit."

Quoting newspaper reports, he said that the former Indian Prime Minister I K Gujral made a public statement in Dhaka in July last year that India did not demand transit facilities from Bangladesh. The BNP leader also claimed Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka, Dev Mukherjee, clearly said in August 1997 that India was not interested in bargaining with Bangladesh for transit facilities.

"If the statements are true, why should Awami League offer transshipment facilities to India?"

Asked whether he seriously believes that India did not need transit facilities, a grinning Shamsul Islam said, "Well, we are aware of Indian economic aspirations centring around Bangladesh. The chief of an Indian business delegation disclosed in Dhaka last year that they will save 9,000 crore rupee every year, if they do not have to use the present circumventing routes to send their goods from Bihar or West Bengal to the northeastern parts of the country."

Reminded of the Prime Minister's claim that Bangladesh would earn 2000 crore taka a year if India is provided with the proposed facilities, the BNP leader said: "While claiming the possible income, the PM has referred to World Bank studies. I contacted the Dhaka office of the WB for the study, but the officials concerned have categorically told me that they have conducted no such studies."

When asked what would BNP ask for in exchange of providing transit facilities, he said:

PM on judges, journalists

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the people. Referring to free access among the European countries, she said Bangladesh would be isolated from the world "if we keep our doors closed. We are also discussing transit to Nepal and Bhutan under the regional concept."

In reply to a question, she said the government must have done the homework of how much Bangladesh would be getting in economic profits from transshipment.

The Prime Minister reprimanded the opposition for calling hartal in which she says there is no people's cause or welfare.

In reply to a question Hasina said she won't mind joining a roundtable on hartal issue and advised the editors to write against shutdown as people no longer want to see such strikes.

On a point raised about political tolerance of the party in power, the Prime Minister said assuming power she had tried to run the country on consensus and showed the highest degree of tolerance towards the opposition, which was not seen in the past.

She recalled how Zia, Ershad and Khaleda Zia while in power had resorted to repression on Awami League workers putting them in jails to consolidate their rule.

"She (Khaleda) cannot try Ershad as she took cantonment house, cash, monthly allowance for her sons from Ershad after Zia's killing," the prime minister said in a blistering attack on her arch rival.

On the eviction of slum dwellers, the Prime Minister said her government would ensure homes and better living for each on return to their villages from the squallors.

She said the government was not only clearing the slums but also recovering *khas* lands from illegal occupants.

She said some 70 slums in the city were identified as den of terrorists and drug dealers who were involved in anti-social activities holding the poor slum dwellers hostage.

"How a swimming pool with marble stones could be built inside the slum, how treatment centre to treat the terrorists could be set up, how striptease could be staged there by young girls?" Hasina said questioning the motives behind the protests.

Responding to some NGOs' protest against the eviction, she wanted to know how much money they received from donors in the name of rehabilitating slum people, how much they spent and how many slum dwellers were rehabilitated over the years.

To a question about any possibility of scrapping the Special Powers Act against the backdrop of framing new strong-arm laws to curb terrorism and women repression, the PM replied in the negative.

She said previous govern-

ing transit to India, the former commerce minister said that they could think about it only 'after the government publicly abandons its present project, which, if implemented, would destroy the potential of our economic growth entirely'.

"But I can tell you one thing right at the moment: The BNP would go by the South Asian Preferential Trade Agreement (SAPTA) that took a regional approach towards development in the SAARC region," the former minister said. "Signed in 1993, SAPTA says that the member states would undertake appropriate steps and measures for developing and improving communication system, transport infrastructure and transit facilities for accelerating the growth of trade within the region."

Asked whether SAPTA stands in the way of bilateral negotiations between the SAARC countries, Shamsul Islam said: "Not necessarily. But you have to keep in mind that India is least bothered about our interests, although they are aware about their interests in Bangladesh."

Requested to elaborate, he quoted Peter Gill, South Asia correspondent, Daily Telegraph of London in the early seventies.

"After an interview with Chairman of the Policy Planning Commission of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs D P Dhar, the Telegraph correspondent wrote that 'Dhar saw the potential for economic and commercial relations to him, Bangladesh was a vast market for Indian goods. He saw Bangladesh in mercantile and economic terms. He talked of resumption of pre-partition economic relations between East Bengal and West Bengal.'"

The BNP leader then quoted Lt Gen JFR Jacob who in his book *Sunderland at Dhaka: Birth of a Nation*. He said that he had asked DP Dhar in the seventies to secure three essential guarantees from Bangladesh including transit facilities by rail and inland and 'use of the Chittagong Port'.

He went on to quote Indians to substantiate his comment that India has an eye on Bangladesh for its various economic interests. "Paying a visit to Bangladesh in March this year, Indian commerce minister Mr. Ramkrishna Hedra said that they needed our natural gas and facilities to use our Chittagong port. Chief minister of Mizoram state of India said in Dhaka a few months ago that they need to use Kaptai Lake and Karnafali river to reach Chittagong."

When asked what his party would do if the government of Sheikh Hasina eventually decides to provide the Indians with transshipment facilities, Shamsul Islam said: "I am sure, people of the country would resist the suicidal decision with all their might."

ments of Zia, Ershad and Khaleda had admitted that the country cannot be run without this law and they did not do away with it. "I did never say that I would revoke it."

Asked for her comment about Indian media reports on ISI activities in Bangladesh, the Prime Minister said she won't rule it out as they are carrying out their work at some level as seen in the newspaper reports. But it needs more investigation.

The Prime Minister sought objective and correct information through newspapers, which she described as mirror of society.

She again insisted that like elected public representatives, the Press and the Judiciary should have accountability. Asked if the government would repeal the official secrecy act for helping objective journalism, Hasina said such laws are in force everywhere.

State Minister for Information Prof Abul Sayeed, editors Rahat Khan of Ittefaq, Bazul Rahman of Sangbad, Mahbubul Alam of the Independent, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim of Banglar Bani, Rezauddin Ahmed and Moazzem Hossain of the Financial Express, Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury of Bangladesh Observer, Matur Rahman of Prothom Alo, Benir Ahmed of Bhorer Kagoj, Zakaria Khan of Bangla Bazar Patrika, Matur Rahman Chowdhury of Manobazmin, AM Mofazzal of the New Nation, Mohiuzzaman Faruque of Arthaneei, Enaytullah Khan of UNB, Harun Habib of BSS were, among others, present.

Raw deal

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helping them by giving advice," one of the doctors said. Asked why doctors take money, he said, "We do not demand anything for referring patients to diagnostic centres. The diagnostic centres send 'envelopes' as gifts."

But this has increased the cost of treatment. For example, ultrasonography imaging normally costs not more than Tk 150 including profit, according to a source at a modern diagnostic centre. But the rate for each imaging has been fixed at Tk 400 as per 'understanding with doctors,' he claimed.

A computerised blood culture sensitivity investigation actually costs not more than Tk 200. But a patient is charged Tk 500 for each such test.

For HIV, hepatitis 'B', 'C' and blood group tests, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society charges roughly Tk 400 in a package deal. But a commercial diagnostic laboratory charges no less than Tk 300 for each of these tests except those for determining blood group.