

The Daily Star

BUY NOW - PAY LATER



Whirlpool
HOME APPLIANCES
USA

Gas Cooker

Transcom Electronics Limited

Authorized distributor in Bangladesh for Whirlpool Appliances, USA

LEASE FINANCING

Are You Looking For Financial Assistance In

- Capital Machinery
- Heavy Construction Equipment
- Medical Equipment
- Marine Transport
- Generator & Boiler
- Vehicle like Luxury Buses, Microbuses, Trucks, Tractors
- Cargo Canners, Pick-Up, Cars
- Lifts/Elevators
- Air Conditioning Plants

PHOENIX LEASING COMPANY LTD.

Shadhina Bhaban (1st fl.) 88, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka
Phone: 9569007 (Aut. & Rtn.) Fax: 955777

Agrabad Branch, R.M. House, 31 Agrabad C/A, Ctg. Ph: 710089, Fax: 710086

VOL. IX NO. 2007 REGD. NO. DA 781 INTERNET: <http://www.dailystarnews.com> BHADRA 8 1406 BS DHAKA MONDAY AUGUST 23, 1999 JAMADIUL AWAL 10, 1420 HIJRI 16 PAGES : PRICE TAKA 6.00

Squatters still occupying SC premises

By Special Correspondent

The squatters yesterday continued their occupation of the Supreme Court premises, increasing the number of makeshift homes built with plastic sheets at the sprawling national prayer ground.

Another group remained camped on the pavement in front of the Bailey Road residence of Dr Kamal Hossain, who filed a writ petition challenging the eviction drive with the High Court and secured a court order halting the government move until August 25. The government began the drive on August 12.

Dr Hossain's 'uninvited guests', numbering about 150, sought shelter at his residence at 2am on Saturday, saying that police had expelled from the Dhu Road slum at Maghbarah where they had been living in shelters built with plastic sheet.

Dr and Mrs Hossain, away in London, are expected back home today.

The squatters in front of his house declined to say who had guided them to Dr Hossain's residence. One of them, Monir Hossain, said they had heard he was a good person who would provide them a shelter because he was fighting for them.

The squatter stated in a new dimension yesterday as the ruling party MP from Lalbagh Haji Selim claimed in a statement that he is the president of the Bangladesh Bastuhara Samity.

See Page 12 Col 1

Phensidyl recovery 6 RNB personnel suspended in Dhaka, 10 others 'closed' in Ctg

By Staff Correspondent

Commandant of Railway Nirapatta Bahini (RNB), Dhaka, Iqbal Hossain, was suspended yesterday along with five RNB personnel while 10 RNB personnel were 'closed' in Chittagong. Railway's Eastern Zone headquarters, in connection with Saturday's recovery of 17000 bottles of banned phensidyl.

The others suspended are two inspectors, two havildars and a naik of RNB, police said.

A five-member committee, headed by Din Mohammad Additional General Manager of Railway's Eastern Zone, was also formed to investigate into the incident. The committee is scheduled to submit its report to the DG of Railway within fifteen days.

The phensidyl bottles were recovered from two underground tunnels on the premises of the RNB barrack in the city.

Police filed a case with Motijheel thana Saturday night accusing 28 terrorists and drug traders including one 'china' who was allegedly leading the drug business in the area after the murder of his boss Khokon.

Police interrogated 23 RNB personnel Saturday in connection with the incident but arrested none of them.

Police officials said they have recommended to the Railway authorities for taking departmental action against "a number of RNB personnel".

Inside Today

Article

The Air Laden with Bin Laden's Ire

Column: Perspectives by Brig (Rtd) M Abdul Hafiz

Page 4

Focus

Challenges in the energy sector: What should we do?

Page 5

Business

Southeast Asian recovery a bad news for Bangladesh

Turkey may issue 'earthquake bonds' for extra financing

DSE, CSE price quotations

Pages 6, 7 & 8

Prayer Timings

August 23		
	Azhan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-10	4-15
Johr	12-50	1-25
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-40	6-45
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

High Court asks govt Remove squatters from court compound

The High Court authorities have asked the government to evacuate the squatting slum dwellers from their compound for the sake of discipline and security at the country's highest seat of justice, reports UNB.

Home Minister Mohammad Nasim admitted the receipt of an official letter from the High Court, which the DMP Commissioner handed him yesterday morning.

The letter stated that many slum dwellers have been assembling on the Supreme Court premises since about 6 pm on August 18 and creating indiscipline.

"So it's imperative to evict them immediately from the Bangladesh Supreme Court premises," says the petition addressed to the DMP Commissioner on August 19.

The judicial authorities observed the matter should be considered as very important since it involves discipline and security of the court and urged the police administration to take necessary action on an emergency basis.

Reacting to the High Court letter, the Home Minister told newsmen that he received it yesterday morning and referred

it to the Law Ministry and the Attorney General for legal opinions.

"I am considering it with utmost importance since the High Court expressed concern and raised the point of discipline and security," Nasim said.

He said it is unwarranted that slum dwellers trespass and raise slums in the Supreme Court grounds, which under no circumstances can be acceptable.

The Home Minister said that he would have taken immediate action had the letter been issued at any other time. But the High Court Division of the Supreme Court issued an injunction on August 23 on the eviction of slum dwellers.

In view of the High Court injunction, he will have to study whether it would be tantamount to contempt of court or violation of the honourable judges' orders by his ministry or administration if it goes for eviction based on the letter of the High Court Registrar.

"I will have to seek legal counsel from the Ministry of Law" to see if there is any scope to go for action pending the court's embargo, the Home Minister said.

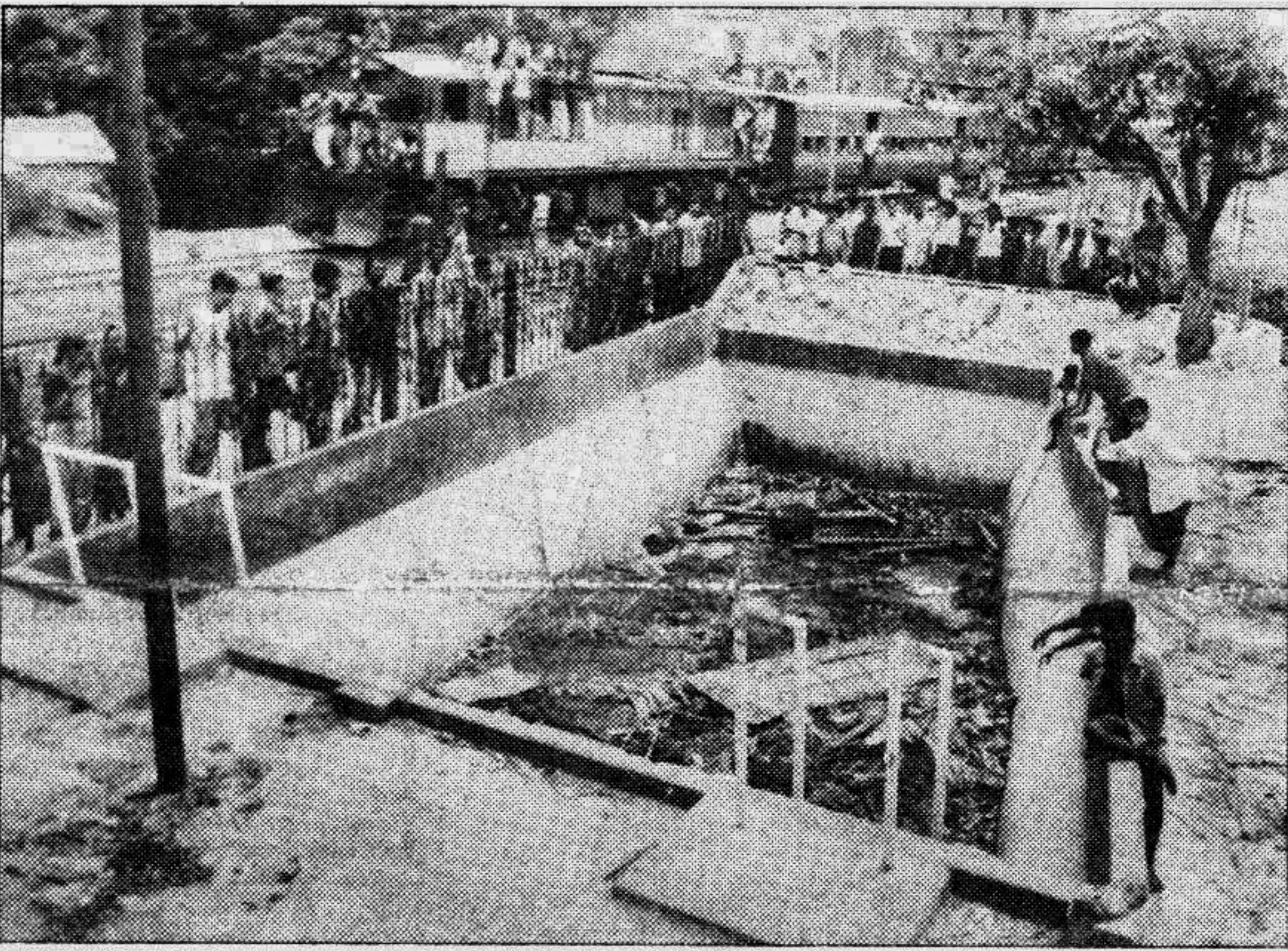
He made it clear that the government had already said it does not support any illegal slums on any government or private lands, which helped build dens for terrorists, drug dealers and anti-social elements.

But as the government went for cleaning up these sanctuaries of terrorists and drug dealers, some NGOs, political groups and some nondescript politicians aborted the good effort for opposition's sake, obstructing it through court orders as well, he said.

Nasim said although Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had undertaken various rehabilitation plans and housing schemes for the poor and river-erosion victims, these quarters hampered the move to recover government land from illegal occupants by displaying the poor people and claiming the humanitarian ground to gain cheap popularity.

He deplored that those who did not make minimum contribution for rehabilitation of the poor, those who brought lakhs of taka from abroad but failed to implement rehabilitation plans were now spreading

See Page 12 Col 2



A 'swimming pool' at TT Para slum, reportedly built and used by the so-called Khokon Bahini. Reports also have it that its vicinity has long been the den of drug traffickers.

—Star photo by Anisur Rahman

Huge arrear bills in gas, power sectors unrealised

By Sharier Khan

Although the country's energy sector has become the focal area of investment in recent years, the government is making little effort for realisation of huge arrear bills in the gas and power sectors.

According to official data, unpaid bills total over Tk 1400 crore in the gas sector and over Tk 3400 crore in the power sector. Non-realisation of bills is crippling the prospects of the two sectors, sources concerned said.

"These facts certify how serious the government is about the energy sector," said a source. "The government has been trying for the last eight years to attract private investment in power and gas sectors because it lacks resources. But it did very little to help improve the financial mess in the sectors."

The gas transmission and distribution companies under Petrobangla are gradually becoming sick due to severe financial mismanagement, he

observed.

If such mismanagement goes on, gas purchase from foreign gas field developers will become a big burden for Petrobangla which may run into liquidity crisis in future.

Titas, Jalalabad and Bakhrabad gas companies now have over Tk 860.22 crore dues lying with consumers. Again, these companies owe Tk 553.09 crore to three other Petrobangla owned gas production and transmission companies—Gas Transmission Company Ltd (GTCL), Bangladesh Gas Fields Company Ltd (BGFCL) and Sylhet Gas Field Ltd (SGFL). The unpaid bills total about Tk 1413.31 crore.

Similarly, the Power Development Board (PDB) has over Tk 2200 crore dues lying with Dhaka Electric Supply Authorities (DESA) which also has Tk 1220 crore dues from its subscribers. Together, the unpaid bills are about Tk 3420 crore.

"Yet, these figures do not seem to scare our decision makers. PDB/DESA roughly gets revenue against only 56 per cent of the total power sold," observed another source.

Although most of the defaulters are government organisations, the authorities have taken no special steps so far to realise these dues.

In the power sector, other than DESA, the biggest defaulters are among private consumers. There is no serious attempt by DESA and PDB to realise the dues.

PDB and Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) owe Petrobangla Tk 408.06 crore. Kamapluji Fertiliser Factory Ltd (KAFCO), the biggest foreign investment in the country under BCIC, has outstanding gas bills of Tk 82 crore.

Gas consumers in the private sector, both domestic and industrial, are also a big headache for Titas which has Tk 337 crore outstanding bill lying in the sector.

See Page 12 Col 4



A young man is being beaten up by rival activists at city's Arambagh during hartal hours yesterday.

—Star photo

40 hurt in sporadic violence during day-long hartal

By Staff Correspondent

The dawn-to-dusk hartal called by the BNP-led opposition alliance paralysed normal life and economic activities and halted traffic in the capital and elsewhere in the country yesterday, leaving at least 40 people injured in sporadic incidents of violence.

The alliance called the nationwide shutdown to protest killing of a party activist at Narayanganj and attacks on opposition demonstrators in different parts of the country during the DC office programme on August 18. The opposition parties, however, claimed that three people were killed in Narayanganj.

The second hartal in less than three weeks also came as a sequel to the opposition campaign to protest the government decision to provide corridor facility to India in the name of transshipment. The opposition parties enforced 30-hour hartal on August 23.

In capital Dhaka, at least 30 people were injured in different

areas in bomb explosions and police action.

More than 11 people were injured when a crude bomb was thrown into a Gazipur-bound bus at Tikatuli crossing in the city at about 11:15 am. Witnesses and injured passengers said the powerful bomb was thrown from a minibus that sped away.

Ten of the injured passengers, who were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), were identified as Rafiqul Islam (18), Rupchand Miah (30), Shahid (35), Shaikh Badsha (25), Hasina (30), Nadira (30) Khokon (32), Abdul Qader (45), Mohammad Hossain (38) and Jamaluddin (40).

Police said they arrested a total of 45 opposition activists, including Dhaka University student general secretary of Jatiyatadabi Chhatra Dal Mostafizul Islam Mamun, on charges of violence and damaging rickshaws.

As usual, Shaheed Faruq Road at Jatrabari was the most

troubled spot in the city, witnessing opposition activists and law enforcers clash for hours.

Some 15 people were injured in Jatrabari area during the clashes. Police fired teargas shells as pickets exploded bombs and pelted stones at police at Shaheed Faruq Road.

Witnesses said a riot van of police came under bomb attack when it was firing teargas canisters indiscriminately.

Policeemen, posted on rooftops in the area, were forced to come down as the pickets threw cocktails and stones at them. Firing of tear shells, rubber bullets and explosion of bombs continued till the end of the hartal.

City's Bijoynagar, Kakrail, Nayapalton, Malibagh and Mouchak areas saw separate processions by BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islamic Oikya Jote. Activists in these areas damaged some rickshaws and exploded bombs.

See Page 12 Col 5

Opposition to bring out processions today

From Staff Correspondent

The opposition alliance will bring out mass processions in the divisional headquarters today to protest government's move to give corridor to India in the name of transit.

The Chittagong chapter of the opposition alliance committee reduced yesterday's hartal to six hours to take preparation for today's mass procession to be led by the leader of opposition and BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia, according to Our Staff Correspondent in Chittagong.

BNP yesterday launched hectic campaign holding rallies and processions to muster support for the mass procession.

Arches have been erected by BNP supporters at different places of the city to welcome their leader Khaleda Zia.

Mass procession will start at 2 pm from Lalbagh maidan and end at port connecting road.

Officials of the local administration said tight security would be maintained here during the mass procession with deployment of BDR, police and APBN members to prevent any untoward incident.

BNP secretary general Abdul

See Page 12 Col 5

Khaleda to lead Aug 26 road march

By Staff Correspondent

BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia will lead the Dhaka-Bhairab road march on August 26 protesting the government move to provide 'corridor' to India and 'Awami misrule,' reports UNB.

The road march will begin at 10 am from Jatrabari Crossing, said a party press release.

During the march, Begum Zia will address wayside rallies at Tarabo in Rugganj thana, Bagbari in Ararhazar thana, Madhabdi High School premises in Narsingdi sadar, Panchdona in Palash thana, Itakhola in Shibpur thana, Karicha Bazaar in Belabo thana, Nilkuthi in Raipura thana and Bhairab Stadium.

Leaders and workers of the party have been asked to join the road march with their own vehicles and to collect stickers from the party central office by August 24.

JIC to interrogate Ershad Shikder in Dhaka

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Aug 22: Top terror and word commissioner Ershad Ali Shikder will be sent to Dhaka from Jessore Central Jail tomorrow, KMP sources said.

Ershad Shikder will be handed over to Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC) there for interrogation.

He surrendered to police recently. But police could not recover any illegal arms or ammunition from his possession, sources added.

The JIC will take him on remand to know the sources of his power which made him godfather of professional killers and criminals.

Two drown in Narsingdi boat capsizes

From Our Correspondent

NARSINGDI, Aug 22: Two persons drowned when a passenger boat capsized in the river Meghna at Hajipur Ghat in sadar thana this morning.

Police and witnesses said the Narsingdi bound boat from Daribaluakandi in Raipur thana capsized and sank in the river at around 8 am when passengers of the boat tried to get down hurriedly.

At least 20 others were injured.

Local people recovered the bodies of Suha, 7, daughter of one Abul Kashem of Raipura and Tajmahal Begum, 42.

The injured were admitted to sadar hospital. Narsingdi police super and other officials visited the spot.

Udyan: Memo to PM today

By Staff Correspondent

"Save the 11 Thousand Trees of Osmany Udyan" will organise a march towards the Prime Minister's Office today and submit a memorandum urging her to save the park.

A part of the park has been selected by the government for construction of a convention centre for the 2001 NAM summit.

The organisation which has drawn prominent citizens and intellectuals is campaigning for shifting the site of the proposed convention centre elsewhere in the city to save the park, the last green space between old and new Dhaka.

In a press release Prof Siraj-ud-Daula said...



File photo of Rahul Gandhi flanked by sister Priyanka and mother Sonia Gandhi.

See Page 12 Col 5

Rahul joins mother's polls campaign

VILLIPURAM (India), Aug 22: The son of Congress party leader Sonia Gandhi and assassinated former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi joined his mother's election campaign today, extending India's most illustrious political dynasty to yet another generation, reports AP.

Rahul Gandhi, 27, quit his job as a financial consultant in London to devote his time to the campaign, the Congress party announced at a rally in the southern town of Villipuram. He was not planning to run for office in voting set for September and October.

News that Rahul Gandhi — whose family has produced three prime ministers — would enter the political fray bubbled through the huge crowd at a stadium where his mother was to address party supporters later today.

As Sonia's helicopter descended just outside the venue, tens of thousands of people cheered, after waiting hours in sweltering heat.

"Hail Sonia Gandhi! Hail Rahul Gandhi!" the crowd shouted.

Rahul Gandhi's grandfather was Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister after independence from Britain in 1947. His grandmother was Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who was assassinated in 1984.

Last week, Sonia Gandhi said in a TV interview that both Rahul and her daughter, Priyanka, "are extremely interested in politics," but were apparently not interested in being candidates. Both children have accompanied her at several campaign stops.

Police fortified Villipuram, 250 kilometers south of

Madras, to protect Sonia who intelligence officials say face a threat from Tamil rebels, who fear a crackdown if she comes to power.

She is one of the most protected people in India, surrounded by 48 commandos at all times. Her husband was assassinated by a Tamil suicide bomber at a 1991 election rally in Sriperambudur in Tamil Nadu state.

Jayaram Jayalalitha, a powerful and capricious regional politician who toppled the government of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee this year, was also set to address the gathering in a show of strength with her ally, Sonia Gandhi.

After the collapse of the Vajpayee government in April, Sonia initially declared she would form a new coalition, but then was unable to cobble together enough support to form a ma-

majority in parliament, leading to fresh elections.

Vajpayee is the caretaker prime minister until the elections. A new government is expected to be in place by mid-October.

Vajpayee held a string of public rallies in the state Saturday attended by hundreds of thousands.

Sonia is running for election in two constituencies — Bellary and Amethi.

It was at such a rally that former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was blown up by a Tamil Tiger rebel suicide bomber who strapped explosives to her waist and mingled with crowds in the town of Sriperambudur.

Rajiv Gandhi had antagonised rebels by sending Indian troops to Sri Lanka in 1987 to enforce a peace accord aimed at