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Fresh areas in 7 districts flooded

The over all flood situation deteriorated further yesterday, leaving several lakh people marooned, reports UNB.

Reports from Narayanganj, Madaripur, Jamalpur, Sirajganj, Gaibandha, Rangpur and Chandpur said water levels in most of the rivers of these districts marked a further rise, inundating fresh areas.

In Narayanganj, 35 unions in Fatullah, Siddhirganj, Sonargaon, Araihazar and Rupganj thanas were inundated.

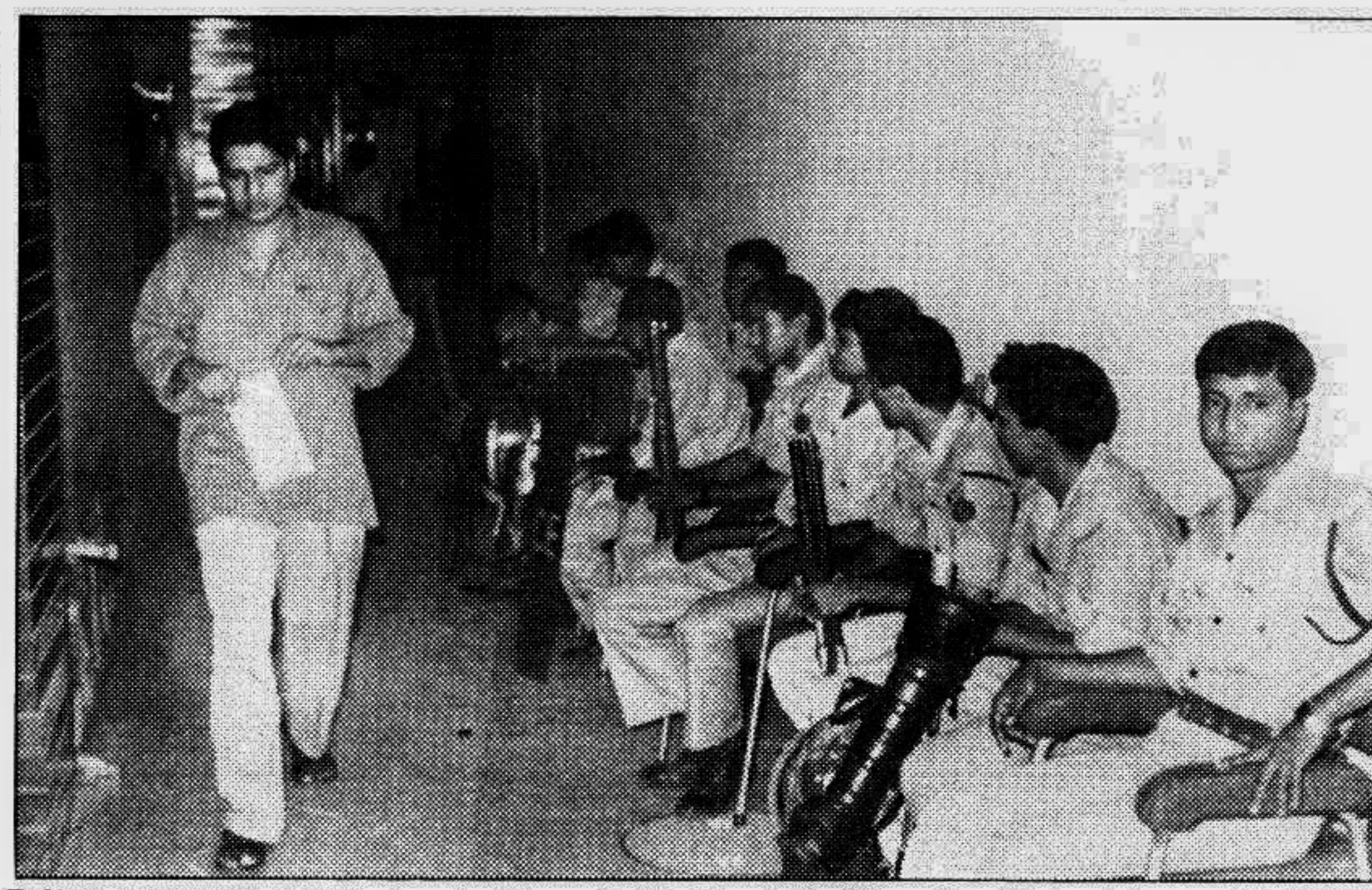
The Shitalakha and the Meghna rose further and were flowing 29 and 50 cm above their danger marks.

Shahidnagar, Syedpur, Kashipur, Charanansinghpur, Bholali, Pashchim Masdair, Pashchim Deobhog, part of Golchappa, Dikhirchar, Alirtek, Nabinagar, Muslimnagar, Enayetpur, Dharmaganj and Bangla Bazar and part of Nitaganj of the town were affected by the flood.

In Madaripur, water level of the Padma, Ariakha, Kumar and Palodra rivers are rising alarmingly. Ariakha was flowing 43 cm above the danger level.

In Jamalpur, the flood situation remained unchanged but low-lying areas in seven thanas were inundated. The Jamuna and the Brahmaputra flowing in the areas, however, rose further.

Flood situation in Sirajganj district worsened with the rise of river water as rain and onrush of hill water from across the border continued.



Police guarding UCBL head office at Motijheel in the city. The picture was taken yesterday. — Star photo

HC halts operation

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When contacted Zahir said that he was not given a copy of the petition being a party to the case. "Instead the government (attorney general's office) was given a copy of the petition despite not being a party to the case."

The petitioners accused Bangladesh Bank and the law enforcing agencies of being aware of what was happening in the UCBL as they refused to render assistance.

They also contended that while a board meeting was in progress in presence of the observers from the central bank and ministry of finance, the former UCBL chairman Akhteruzzaman Chowdhury Babu and his son Saifuzzaman Chowdhury Zaved, accompanied by 50 to 60 "miscreants, all of them variously armed with pistols, revolvers, guns, knives, daggers, axes, etc entered the head office of UCBL breaking open its iron closable door and entered the boardroom."

The petition said that the "miscreants" started abusing and beating the members indiscriminately damaging valuable properties of the bank and stealing valuable belongings of the directors.

It said that despite request for assistance from the law enforcing agencies and higher authorities no help or assistance was received. "They called repeatedly for help but police refused to arrive."

Instead, the petitioners said, that a contingent of police came along with Babu and his men and were standing in front of the office on the road but did not enter the office to stop the criminal activities inside.

"It seems that the police force was there to protect the miscreants at the instance of some high-ups," the petition said. They also said that Chowdhury and his son forced the petitioners to resign.

Narrating the incidents the petitioners said that they had gone to file cases but police initially refused to accept any FIR and finally "after a long persuasion and repeated lobbying" accepted three cases.

They also said that the UCBL directors tried to contact the governor and other officers of Bangladesh Bank "but all of them rendered no assistance but merely commented that they would get back to them later."

"Such behaviour on the part of the BB gave reasons to suspect that they were also aware of what was happening in the bank which they totally supported."

"Bangladesh Bank instead of taking any action against the

Govt, BB high-ups blamed

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perpetrators of such illegal criminal acts in a broad daylight at a bank which was looted only 200 yards from it, issued the impugned notice dated 27.8.99 on a Friday, a non working day, whereas it is non duty of the Bangladesh Bank to protect one of the most well-known, well-managed and renowned banks of the country and the members of its board of directors from such thugs and crooks while they were being subjected to savage attacks by armed miscreants.

"Bangladesh Bank acting in a most irrational, unreasonable manner under the pretence of exercise of name of statutory power purported to remove the board of directors after miscreants under protection of police had reduced the head office of UCBL in a shambles bringing disgrace and shame to the entire nation and the banking sector."

Babu calls it all a conspiracy

Akhteruzzaman Chowdhury Babu yesterday came up with the claim that he is an elected director and chairman of the UCBL as per banking laws of the land, reports UNB.

The business tycoon cum politician, who allegedly led a foray into the bank board meeting on Thursday, also asserted that he is not a loan defaulter.

"If anybody can prove me loan defaulter, I'll give up politics," said the ruling Awami League central leader in a statement.

Babu said he enjoyed support of two-thirds majority of the board of directors. But former chairman of UCBL and four other directors are propagating against him to tarnish his political, social and business image.

He said he was the principal sponsor to set up the bank in 1983. "Of the total Tk 10 crore startup capital, 1 and my family invested Tk 7.5 crore while other sponsor-directors invested only Tk 10 lakh each," he added.

As the bank started making a mark, then other directors started conspiring to remove him. Although Bangladesh Bank's three-year expulsion order expired in 1995, conspirators continued to obstruct him from joining the board of directors, he alleged.

"Conspirators are now trying to brand me as a loan defaulter," says Babu who has been sued by the rivals for Thursday's incident.

He denied the charge of attacking the UCBL board meeting on August 26. Rather he alleged, Jahangir Alam Khan pointed pistol at him while Zafar Ahmed Chowdhury and his men pounced on him and his son and snatched their money.

BB Governor

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dent at UCBL and recommended serving of the notices for greater interest of the depositors." The Governor said.

"We thought that we should know the real incident. Since a resolution had been taken at the UCBL board after the incident, we thought we should send letters to both of them. We wanted to refrain both the parties from (causing) further trouble."

The governor also said that despite the crisis, UCBL had averted a serious setback.

"The bank suffered no massive negative impact. There were higher deposit withdrawals than that of normal situation. But a good sign was that people also deposited money with the branches of the bank."

Rickshaw garage owner stabbed to death in city

By Staff Correspondent

An owner of a rickshaw garage was stabbed to death allegedly by his wife's step brother in the city's Khilgaon area Saturday night.

The dead was identified as Rawshan Ali, 30, son of Abdul Khaled, a resident of Madhya Nandipara under Khilgaon thana, police and hospital sources said.

Sheuli Begum, wife of the dead, alleged that her two step brothers — Jahangir and Alamgir — stabbed his husband to death following a dispute over possession of her father's property.

Khilgaon police arrested Jahangir yesterday while Alamgir has been absconding since the incident.

According to police, the killers entered Rawshan's rickshaw garage at Nandipara sometime between 10 pm and 11:30 pm Saturday and stabbed him in his head with a machete.

Fatally injured Rawshan was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the attending doctors declared him dead.

The body was sent to DMCH morgue for autopsy. Wife of the dead filed a murder case yesterday.

East Timor tense: Vote today

DILI, (East Timor), Aug 29: Indonesia's military said today it might not be able to control the situation in East Timor, despite warring groups agreeing to give up their weapons ahead of tomorrow's independence vote, reports Reuters.

The territory was tense today, with mobs armed with machetes, pipe guns and samurai swords wandering the streets of the capital Dili, but there were no major incidents reported.

More than 450,000 East Timorese in the territory and around the world have registered for the UN-run ballot which is expected to see the territory split from Indonesia and embark on an uncertain path to independence.

The result will take about a week to declare and must still be approved by Indonesia's top legislative body, the 700-member People's Consultative Assembly, which convenes in October.

In an address on state television, Indonesian President B J Habibie told East Timorese to vote according to their conscience but urged them not to turn their backs on Indonesia.

East Timor, I want to call on them to remain united (with Indonesia), to build a brighter future together with the rest of the Indonesian family," Habibie said.

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UCBL board

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thought that he was appointed chairman by us, he still needed approval by the BB itself. Has BB given the approval?"

Earlier, Zafar Chowdhury had appealed to the BB yesterday to reconsider its suspension order.

Transport strike in Khulna

KHULNA, Aug 29: Traffic movement in the city came to a halt as transport workers went on a wildcat strike this noon protesting against fellow workers, reports UNB.

The police said a group of terrorists attacked transport worker Mohidul early today at the local bus stand and shot him on refusal to pay illegal tolls. Mohidul was admitted to Khulna Medical College Hospital.

Another group of terrorists beat up truck workers Mujibur and Jalil at Khan Jahan Ali Road in the city on refusal of tolls this morning.

Protesting the attacks, truck and bus workers stopped plying of their vehicles and put up barricade at different points of the city at noon.

Sramik Dal activist murdered at Feni

From Our Correspondent

FENI, Aug 29: Awami League and BNP activists exchanged fire for half an hour in front of Model High School in the town this morning following the death of a Sramik Dal activist.

Kamrul, 22, a Sramik Dal activist was kidnapped by his opponents from Trunk Road area on Friday night. They beat him mercilessly and severed tendons of his hands and legs.

Kamrul was rushed to Feni hospital where he died on Saturday night.

Feni district BNP general secretary Prof Joyanal Aedin blamed the ruling party men for the killing and demanded arrest of the killers.

In another incident on Saturday night, a group of terrorists picked up a JCD activist Anwar, 18, from his house at Madhukhal in Sadar thana and beat him up.

Conference of Asian MPs from Wednesday

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Badruddoza Chowdhury in a letter to the Speaker alleged that the government of Sheikh Hasina created a reign of terror against its political opponents, leaving no scope for the Opposition to participate in a peace conference. He also accused the Speaker of proven bias against the Opposition in running the business of the House.

Replying to a question, the Speaker admitted having received Chowdhury's letter. He said it is "disappointing" that the Opposition has decided not to attend the conference.

"To all our brothers in East Timor, I want to call on them to remain united (with Indonesia), to build a brighter future together with the rest of the Indonesian family," Habibie said.

(See also page 9)

position contention relevant to boycotting an international peace conference. He said he will make further efforts to make the Opposition attend the conference.

The Speaker said that BNP leader M Saifur Rahman who was a member of the organising committee, was still a member of the five-member delegation of Bangladesh parliament.

The general theme of the conference is peace. But to give the term a proper perspective in the Asian context, the organisers have elaborated its definition. "Peace is not merely absence of war, conflict or violence. It is a state in which each nation can flourish according to its own wish and includes overall social and economic growth, removal of injustice, respect for human rights and humanitarian laws, among other factors."

According to sources in the organising committee, four papers on different subjects relating to peace will be presented at the conference. The topics have been chosen in the light of the Hague Agenda for Peace and Justice in the 21st Century which was adopted at an international conference held in May this year.

The topics include International Humanitarian and Human Rights Laws and Institutions; Prevention, Resolution and Transformation of Violent

Deposit: UCBL allays fear

The management of United Commercial Bank Ltd (UCBL), in a press statement yesterday, assured all categories of depositors that the Bank has a sufficient reserve to face any situation arising out of some recent incidents at its head office, reports BSS.

Referring to some press reports about withdrawal of money by the depositors, the statement said it would like to disclose that UCBL is one of the biggest banks in the private sector in Bangladesh, having a deposit of more than Tk 1,100 crore. The liquidity of the Bank is quite satisfactory to meet any emergency situation; the bank management said.

The Bank met the obligation of the depositors from its own resources without borrowing from Bangladesh Bank or any other bank, the management said and requested the general public and depositors not to pay heed to any rumours.

Khulna: No panic withdrawal of deposit

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Aug 29: There was no report of panic withdrawal of deposit from any of two branches of UCBL in the Khulna Metropolitan city.

The withdrawal of deposit from the K D Ghose road and the Khanjahan Ali road branches was quite normal, said assistant vice president Dewan Mosharraf Hossain.

More than 60 lakh taka were deposited today with both branches of the bank, he said.

There was no impact on today's transaction due to Thursday's incident in Dhaka. But this correspondent found a lot of depositors worried and making queries about fate of their deposits.

The AVP assured them of security of their deposits at any cost.

Two outsiders arrested from DU hall

By DU Correspondent

Police arrested two outsiders from the annexe of Hajji Mohammad Moin Hall of Dhaka University Saturday night.

Lablu, a student of Dhaka College and Alberuni, a garment worker were arrested during a raid on the residential hall near New Market in the city.

Police recovered some cannabis, empty bottles of wine and garment accessories during the two-hour raid, conducted from 10:30 pm. However, police failed to recover any arms or ammunition from the residential hall.

The authorities also sealed room 3014 of the hall, from where the two were arrested. Both of them were produced before the court yesterday.

Dharamoni police said.

Meanwhile, hall sources said tension was prevailing in the hall following rehabilitation of Siddique, a student of Social Welfare Department. Siddique, a resident of room no 3019 was driven out by other students of the hall on Wednesday for his alleged involvement in theft.

Mainuddin Ahmed Babu, former president of BCL Zahirul Haq Hall allegedly brought back Siddique to the hall on Thursday, sources said.

60 Indian air rifles recovered in Jhenidah

From Our Correspondent

KHULNA, Aug 29: Task Force recovered 60 Indian air rifles from an abandoned house at Ballipara village under Kalganga thana of Jhenidah District in the early hours of Saturday.

Captain Aminul Haq, Adjutant of 32 Rifle Battalion, Jessore led the operation, BDR sources said.

The air rifles were found concealed in a box and they were sent from Nadia district of West Bengal, sources added.

Shelter for slum dwellers NGOs yet to reply to govt proposal

By Special Correspondent

The NGOs are yet to reply to a government proposal urging them to provide shelter to about 40 thousand people whose homes were bulldozed in different city slums early this month during an eviction drive, forcing them to join the city's floating population.

The government recently asked the NGOs who run micro-credit, health, sanitation, education, family planning and other social programmes among the slum residents in the city to provide shelter to the people evicted from the slums for three months.

The government's relief and rehabilitation ministry offered to provide food for them if NGOs provide shelter to the homeless in view of the concern expressed by the NGOs on the eviction drive.

NGO sources said that the reply is expected soon. But it is likely to be negative. They said a draft which has been prepared pointed out that the government is fully aware that the NGOs do not have the space or capability to provide shelter to so many people who had been thrown out of their homes.

If the government really cares for them it should arrange their rehabilitation and discuss with the NGOs any requirement for help in this regard, the sources added.

The NGOs recently expressed concern over the government move to evict another 40 thousand people who live in the city's biggest slum—the BNP bustee at Argagaan — would disrupt their development programmes.

They feared that wholesale eviction of the shanties without arranging rehabilitation of the residents would lead to a disaster to their programmes, including micro-credit, estimated to be around Tk 1,000 crore in the city slums.

They also felt that simply bulldozing the shanty townships would only swell the ranks of the city's homeless and floating people and create unemployment and spur crime.

The move to evict the Argagaan slum also prompted the High Court to ask the authorities to first collect the judgement given by the court last week which made a clear demarcation on the ground rules for eviction.

It should be in phases under a master plan arranging rehabilitation of the slum residents, respecting their right to life and living using maximum restraint, the court said suggesting that the government could enlist the NGOs for help in such a gigantic task.

Support for WRIP

From page 1

take the risks it should take as the investor, they maintained.

The government experts' observations were reinforced by World Bank's (WB) stance on the project. WB repeatedly pointed out that the WRIP proposal was not done on the basis of any feasibility study and the whole project sounds "unrealistic".

Finally, the US Energy Department which is currently helping the government in implementing a number of energy related schemes, gave its opinion that WRIP was a very complicated scheme and it should be implemented after carefully scrutinising its components. The Energy Department also added that the project must be implemented in a transparent manner. Otherwise, Bangladesh's interest may be harmed, it said.

However, Unocal officials believe that the project does not have any loophole. Through implementing WRIP, the growing economic activities in the western region will bring benefits worth millions of dollars, they claim.

The Prime Minister gave a green signal in early June for appointment of a consultant under the US funds. However, due to various reasons, the consultant has not yet been appointed.

The consultant will review the viability and technicalities of the project and float a tender to seek "matching proposals" from other oil companies.

But the sources claimed that the tender will provide a very short time for making "matching proposals" and it is unlikely that any company will submit any "genuine proposal".

3 to die for murder in Jamalpur

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, Aug 29: A court here today awarded death sentence to three people in a sensational murder case.

The accused are Babu, Dipu and Haripada.

According to the prosecution, Fakir Mia of Chamra gudam area was called out of his house by his friends Babu, Dipu and Haripada on August 7, 1996. Since then he was missing.

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নতুন ঠিকানাঃ

আমিজ ভবন

(পুরাতন খীভলজে ব্যাংক ভবন)

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(অর্থনৈতিক নিরাপত্তার প্রতীক)

Editor : Mahfuz Anam