

Your 20-page weekend paper

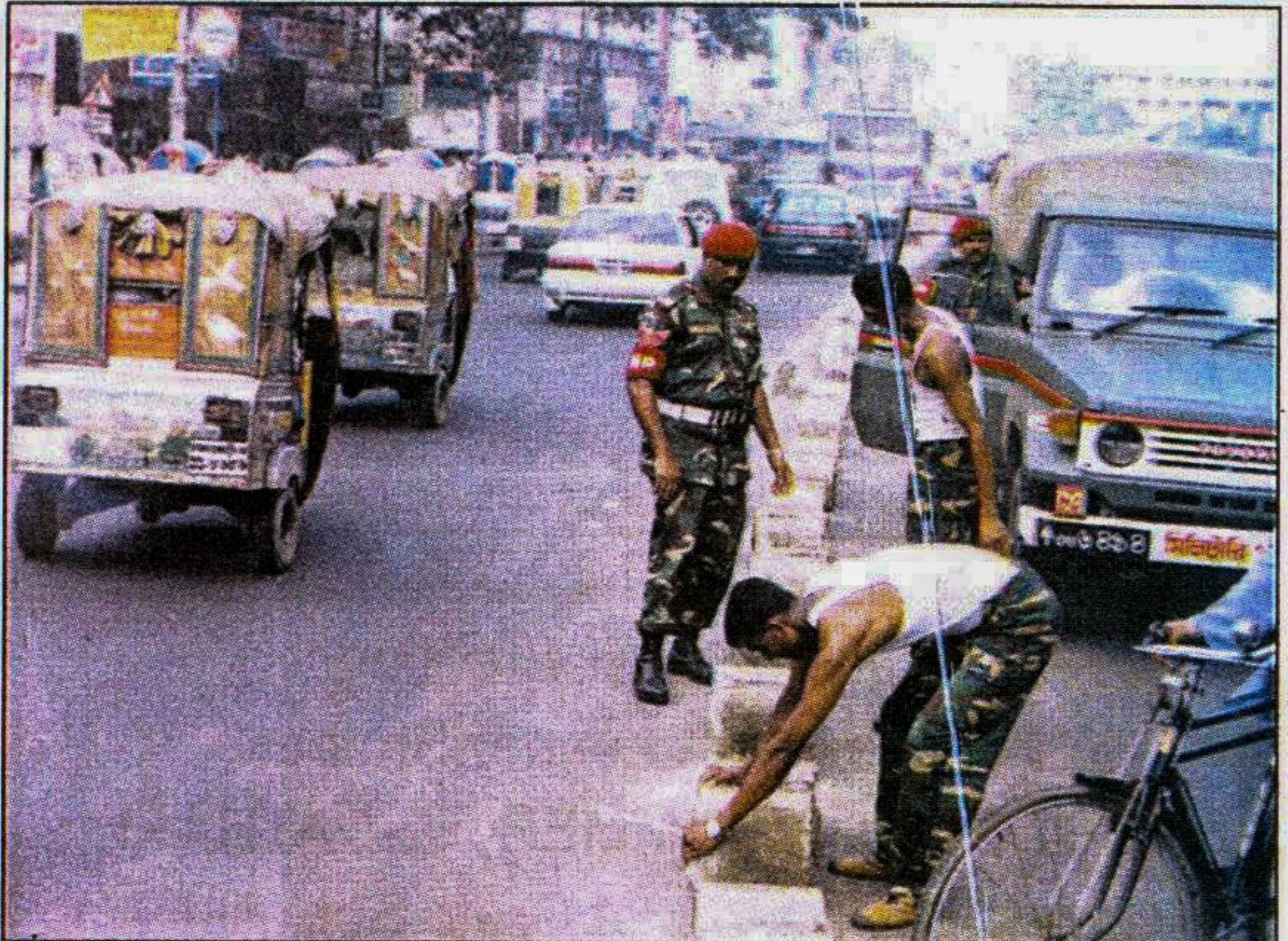
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Battlefield indeed

Army jawans at work on a city street to get the traffic flow in order.

—Star photo: A K M Mohsin

How can we scrap a deal not signed as yet?

Hasina does not see public cause in BNP campaign

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said the BNP-led opposition has chosen a course of agitation which will not succeed, for it lacks a public cause.

She said her party, Awami League, had taken a similar course of action against the government of Khaleda Zia in the early nineties, but it was fighting for people's franchise. BNP, however, does not have a similar public cause. "That's why we succeeded, but BNP won't."

While delivering her valedictory speech in the Jatiya Sangsad just before the prorogation of the session yesterday afternoon, she observed that mere copying of a strategy did not help secure a political victory. The six working day ses-

sion began on August 29. The prime minister satirically said that the opposition movement including its 'so-called long marches' has so far produced nothing other than inflicting injuries to some people including the opposition chief whip.

She, therefore, called upon the Opposition to say whatever it has to say inside the parliament.

Referring to Opposition leader and BNP chief Khaleda Zia's announcement that she would not join the parliament session unless the Cabinet decision on the proposed transhipment of Indian goods through Bangladeshi territory is not discussed in the House, the PM said: "We arranged the discus-

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Rajuk rules flouted

By Staff Correspondent

A nine-storey hospital and diagnostic centre is being constructed at one of the busiest intersections in the city without proper parking facilities.

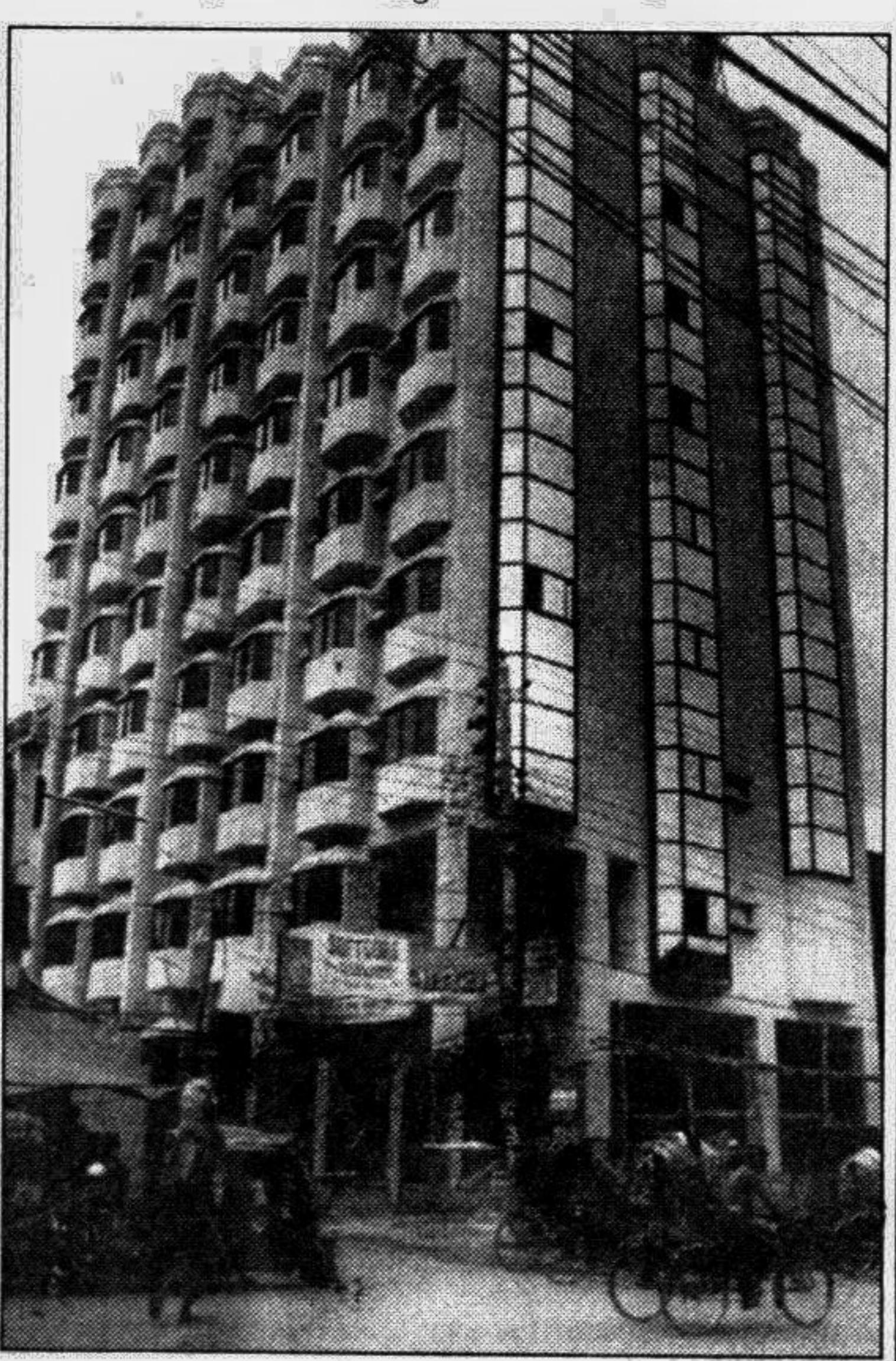
Residents of the Bashiruddin Road and Green Road said once launched, the medicare centre would put serious strain on the already overburdened traffic system in the area.

Traffic congestion during

peak hours is a signature mark for the intersection. To make matters worse, Rajuk has approved construction of several multistoried housing complexes on the narrow Bashiruddin Road over the last few years.

The 53-bed Comfort Diagnostics is being built in clear violation of the Building Con-

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A Rajuk riddle

With parking space for 14 vehicles, the nine-storey hospital building at the busy intersection of Green Road and Bashiruddin Road in the capital has all the ingredients to worsen the already overburdened traffic system.

—Star photo

Ctg AL chieftains lock horns over chamber post

Babu stands for son while Mosharraf fights for brother

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Sept 8: Disgraced ruling party leader Akhteruzzaman Chowdhury Babu and a local minister are locked in a 'battle to capture' leadership of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI). The election of which remains postponed for over eight months, sources concerned said.

Babu is backing his son Salauzzaman Chowdhury Javed, who is now Vice President of CCCI, to get elected as president. Minister for Civil Aviation, Tourism and Works Mosharraf Hossain backs his younger brother Moazzem Hossain for

the post, the sources mentioned.

The minister's brother is also backed by another Awami League leader here, AZM Nasir, who's his 'mentor' Babu due to rivalry between them.

As a sequel to rivalry between Babu and Mosharraf, CCCI members were 'sharply divided' in two rival camps over some election-related issues that led to a legal battle.

The election of CCCI, scheduled to have been held on December 20 last year, was postponed following a court injunction as some members supporting the minister's brother filed

cases.

A fresh date for the election is yet to be fixed as the legal battle is still on.

Besides, no efforts were being made for an understanding between the two rival camps for holding the election, CCCI sources said.

The 'division' arose mainly from a dispute over granting of membership to 600 new applicants, renewal of membership of some old CCCI members and a plea by one group to hold the election without holding the annual general meeting, postponed earlier by a court order.

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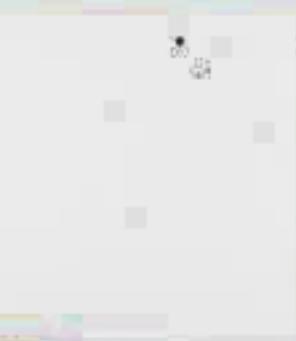
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Noted playwright Saleem Al Deen face to face with Ziaul Karim



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Rotary Governor Ozair Farooq talks about his teenage life to Mir A Zaman and Navine Murshid



Putting the cart before the horse

Under-sourced, irrelevant gas study gives bureaucrats a trip to US

By Sharier Khan

is due in October.

James Chemical began the utilisation study early this year and it started giving early reports in June-July.

Sources said that late in July, a government committee headed by Additional Secretary of Energy Ministry Syed Tanvir Hossain reviewed the 'Inception report' of the Gas Utilisation Study and found some major flaws in its approach.

The Committee observed that the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the Study demanded James Chemical first to estimate Bangladesh's gas reserves and then make recommendations. But the Inception Report focussed on gas utilisation on the basis of some vaguely outlined gas reserve estimates. The Committee felt that the gas reserve analysis was faulty.

The Inception Report said that according to Petrobangla estimates, the country's gas reserve was between 10.7 trillion cubic feet (TCF) and 13 TCF while the Independent Oil Companies (IOCs) estimated it to be 30 to 50 TCF. James Chemical proposed that it would make separate sets of recommendations against both the estimates.

The Committee, giving its observations on the Inception report said, "The review of data available on gas reserve analysis and then to come up with the best basis for study considering possible variation would have been the prudent way to establish the basis for Strategic Gas Utilisation Study for Bangladesh. But on the contrary, in this report, it is mentioned that their approach is to review the existing information on the gas reserves obtained from Petrobangla and IOC, which is substantially a variation from the original commitment."

The Committee also main-

tain that James Chemical gave a vague picture about the future of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), the Committee said. It felt that besides review of gas reserves, the company should analyse and determine the best basis for the study.

Once a reputed firm for its advisory skills, James Chemical now lacks required manpower to conduct such a study. It has assigned other companies like Russel James, Barnes & Click and Development & Democracy for this task, one source pointed out.

Power transmission and distribution had not been taken into consideration and James Chemical gave a vague picture about the future of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), the Committee said. It felt that besides review of gas reserves, the company should analyse and determine the best basis for the study.

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Talking tough

BNP prepares for its 'biggest show' in 38 months of AL government

By Rezaul Karim

The opposition BNP has completed all preparations for making its sit-in demonstration in front of the Secretariat on Sunday the 'biggest ever street agitation in 38 months of this government.'

BNP and its alliance partners — Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islamic Oikya Jote (IOJ) — have taken up the simultaneous programme which will begin at 9am and continue till 2pm to protest the government decision to provide corridor facility to India in the name of transhipment.

The four parties are also likely to announce 'tougher and non-stop action programmes' like hartal, gherao and barricade from the planned sit-in to intensify the anti-government agitation, according to alliance sources.

"The sit-in demonstration will be the first step towards the one-point oust-government movement and this is why we have taken all preparations to make it a total success," said a BNP policy maker.

The parties have also decided to call hartal for not less than 48 hours if the government obstructs the "peaceful" programme or the demonstrators are attacked. "Two hartals have already become due to protest the so-called public security act and the home minister's adverse comment on the Judiciary," the leader said.

He, however, said BNP has decided to observe the programme in a peaceful and disciplined manner and instructions have been given to all its units not to react to any provocation.

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Recipe for progress

It must be quiet on the political front, says Nestlé's global chief

Star Report

Political stability is the key for the development of emerging economies such as Bangladesh to become partners in a globalised economy, says head of one of world's top transnational companies.

Helmut Maucher, the Group Chairman of the global food giant Nestlé SA, says education which gives "knowledge, skills and understanding of international markets" to all the actors in business is vital for emerging markets like Bangladesh.

And, he adds, there is no alternative to openness to make business a two-way traffic. "If you open your market, some people will suffer. But this is a price you pay because you want more prosperity."

Maucher says there is no short-cut to building the institutions needed for a stable system. "It cannot be done in a day. It's a process," Maucher told The Daily Star in an exclusive interview yesterday.

There's "no magic solution" to underdevelopment in these times of globalisation, Maucher said.

Maucher recently ended his tenure as chairman of Paris-based International Chamber of Commerce, the global organisation that has long been dubbed the United Nations of the business world.

"And the mindset has to change, too. You tried SAARC but it's failing," he said.

"Developing regional markets is important. New institutions cannot be run with old ideas. You need ideas to make SAARC a success."

In these times of regional cooperation when NAFTA, ASEAN, EU are the examples of the day, he said the responsibility lay more with bigger partners.

"The arrangements have to be done in a way that does not benefit only the big partner. The bigger you are in power, the more you have the responsibility," Maucher said when asked to review the South Asian regional scene. "Bigger partner must ensure the growth of all the smaller partners."

He did not think that megamergers were posing a threat to competition, arguing that such developments were at worst creating a duopoly. "And duopoly is a fierce competition," Maucher said, citing the market wars between soft drink giants Coca Cola and Pepsi and aircraft industry leaders Boeing and Airbus.



Helmut Maucher was on a short visit to Dhaka yesterday.

— Star photo

a sad story (that poor countries are in the nuclear race.)

"I can meet (French President Jacques) Chirac, but I cannot make him change his policies."

"We work in a framework designed by politicians. Of course we can talk to politicians," he said.

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