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VOL. X NO. 85 REGD. NO. DA 781

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DHAKA WEDNESDAY APRIL 12, 2000

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CHAITRA 29, 1406 BS

MUHARRAM 6, 1421 HIJRI

16 PAGES PRICE : TAKA 6.00

Roads & highways

Crackdown on extortionists begins today

Police action against toll collectors on the roads and highways will begin today since the Home Ministry's deadline to demolish illegal structures and stop toll collection expired at midnight last night, reports UNB.

The Bangladesh Rifles will support the action against toll collectors across the country.

The Home Ministry urged the toll collectors to demolish their illegal toll boxes by Tuesday midnight or face legal action.

Law enforcement agencies See page 11 col 6

SUST students submit memo to President

By DU Correspondent
Students of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) yesterday submitted a memorandum to the Chancellor of the university, President Shahabuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban.

In the memorandum the students demanded immediate re-opening of the university, restoration of congenial academic atmosphere on the campus and solution to the problems raised over naming of some dormitories and buildings of the university.

The students under the banner of 'General Students of SUST' brought out a procession from the Teachers and Students Centre (TSC) of DU at around 10:00 am and marched towards the Bangabhaban.

Police intercepted the procession near High Court and later allowed a three-member delegation to go to the Bangabhaban.

The students also threatened to start fast unto-death at the Central Shaheed Minar from April 26 if their demands were not met before April 25.

PM leaves Washington for Miami

WASHINGTON, Apr 10: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina left here today for Miami on a weeklong private trip to stay with her daughter, Salma Wajedatul, reports UNB.

The Prime Minister is expected to return home on April 20.

Hasina left Dhaka on April 4 on a weeklong visit to the United States to speak at Harvard and receive the prestigious Pearl S. Buck award.

Our new numbers

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April	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
12	-	6:19 pm
13	5:39 am	-

Prayer Timings

April 12	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5:00	5:30
Zohr	12:45	1:30
Asr	4:45	5:00
Maghrib	6:25	6:28
Esha	8:00	8:30

Source: Islamic Foundation

Massive fraud by Mark Bangladesh

90pc overvaluation of assets: Crores of taka siphoned off

By M Shamsur Rahman

A publicly traded company which raised crores of Taka from the share market by charging 100 per cent premium during the 1996 boom has been found to have siphoned off most of the amount from the company, deceiving general shareholders.

A group of experts from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), hired by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), found the company's assets to be 10 per cent of the value shown in its audited balance sheet. SEC is the regulator of the capital market.

The audited balance sheet of the company -- Mark Bangladesh Shilpa and Engineering Ltd -- on June 30, 1998 showed the value of its assets at Tk 50.47 crore. But BUET consultants found that their value was Tk 5.35 crore only, sources said.

An internal investigation by

the regulators last month also found that the company had used its funds for trading on its own shares from the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) in fictitious names.

Based on the reports, the SEC yesterday lodged a complaint petition case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court seeking warrant of arrest against the company's Chairman Imam Mulkutur Rahman Engineer, Vice-chairman Abdul Hai Engineer and Director Salma Akther.

The CMM court, after hearing the petition, referred it to Motijheel police to treat the case as an FIR and investigate the alleged offences.

Motijheel police will make a charge sheet against them if prima facie evidences are found and submit it before the CMM court which will then send it to the Session's Judge's court for charge framing and trial, sources concerned said.

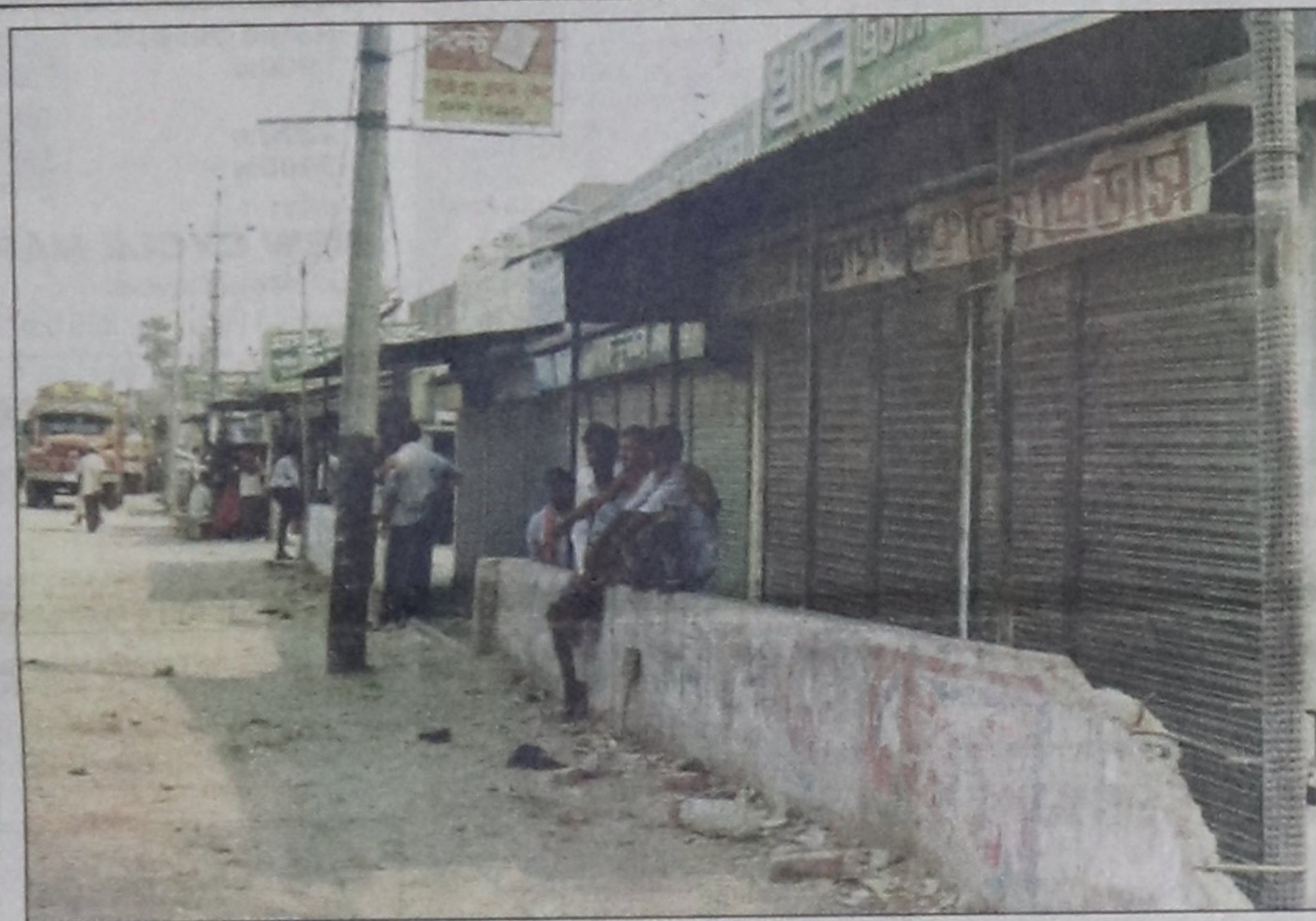
Mark Bangladesh Shilpa and Engineering Ltd went public in October 1996 and raised more than Tk 39 crore from the share market through issuing shares at 100 per cent premium. But utilisation of such huge funds remained a question.

Mark is one of the 16 companies which were directed in early October last year to announce 'compulsory book closure'. The decision was taken in view of the widespread trading of fake shares in the stock market.

The SEC later ordered probe into the affairs of these companies.

The interim report of SEC on Mark had said, "Mark Ltd was involved in irregular activities such as overvaluation of company assets, misappropriation or improper utilisation of IPO funds etc." This prompted the SEC to go for further investigation by another team.

See Page 12 Col 7



Shop owners kept their shutters down at Pagla in Narayanganj yesterday demanding safety of their lives. —Star photo

Dacoity at Haji Selim's shop 5 alleged looters held but no action for road barricade

By Staff Correspondent

No legal step has yet been taken against those who blocked Dhaka-Narayanganj road for six hours after robbers looted cash from a trading house of a ruling party MP at Munshikhola in Narayanganj on Monday.

Meanwhile, police arrested five people, including an Ansar commander on robbery charges at Munshikhola after Haji Selim MP, owner of Madina Trading Corporation, filed a case late Monday night accusing nine people, including Golam Rasul -- a local AL leader and also a UP

chairman -- and his two brothers, police said.

Armed robbers allegedly stormed the cement trading house of Haji Selim at Munshikhola at Pagla in Fatulla and looted about Tk 15 lakh at about 1 p.m. on Monday.

Editorial on page 4

Following the incident, local traders and accomplices of Haji Selim put barricade on the road. Traffic on the road was disrupted for about six hours, locals said.

See page 11 col 3

Accused in 60 cases shot in city

By Staff Correspondent

An accused in more than 60 cases was shot by unidentified gunmen at Bonogram Road in the old part of the city yesterday.

The accused was identified as Bonna Mukhtar, son of Sirajuddinul Baburchi of 30 Goalgat.

The gunmen opened fire on Mukhtar when he reached Bonogram Road at around 11 am.

He received bullets in his head, back and throat. Police rescued him and sent him to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. He is undergoing treatment under police guard.

Sutrapur police said Mukhtar is accused in 62 cases, including 15 murders.

Policeman killed in clash with villagers in Narsingdi

From Our Correspondent
NARSINGDI, Apr 11: One policeman was killed and 20 others were injured in a police-mob clash at village Taguata in Raipura thana under Narsingdi district today.

The deceased was identified as constable Nazrul Islam. He received bullet wounds in his head during the clash.

Police and witnesses said, the clash erupted at about 8 in the morning when the policemen went to the village to arrest some accused in different cases.

Police said the villagers attacked them to prevent the arrest. At one stage they opened fire, killing constable Nazrul Islam on the spot.

In retaliation, police also opened fire on the mob. During the attack and counter-attack, 20 people including five policemen were injured. The injured policemen were admitted to Raipura thana hospital.

The injured villagers have been given treatment at unknown places.

Police arrested five villagers, including Nurul Islam, Selim Mian and Manik in connection with the incident. They did not mention the names of two others in the interest of investigation.

Norwesters hit country

By Staff Correspondent

Norwesters were reported in different parts of the country yesterday.

High winds whipped up a dust storm over the city last night.

The norwester triggered thundershowers, cooling the air but snapping power supplies in many areas at 10:15 p.m.

The meteorological department said norwesters, or seasonal storms accompanied by thunder showers, were reported in Rajshahi, Rangpur, Bogra, Sirajganj, Ishwardi, Mymensingh, Dhaka and Tangail.

Party activists virtually hold DU students hostage

By Abul Kalam Azad

Students of Dhaka University are suffering due to a chain of repressive measures unleashed by student activists of big political parties, especially the ruling party-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL).

The students are now facing physical threat and mental torture by the student activists dominating all the residential halls of the country's highest seat of learning.

Residents of different dormitories of the university usually keep silent and never dare to file complaints to the authorities even after they are victimised by the BCL men repeatedly. The victims do not go for complaint fearing further harassment.

Sources on the campus said, incidents of harassment compel the resident students to participate in processions and rallies are common. But the

hall authorities are unable to protect the students and take action against the culprits, they alleged.

Witnesses said prior to a procession, BCL leaders usually take up position at the hall gates and do not allow students to go out. Their junior party activists visit rooms of the students and ask them to join the procession at the hall gate.

"Forcing students to participate in political programmes is nothing new in hall politics," said a resident of Bangabandhu Hall. But now it has reached the peak. Sometimes, the BCL men bar students from attending classes, he alleged.

A small number of residents show interest in political programmes but the BCL men force the majority of them to participate in those, said another resident of Mohsin Hall. "If any one fails to get involved, he is at times beaten up at the dead mid

night or ousted from the hall," he added.

Talking to The Daily Star, provosts of different halls admitted that incidents of harassing students are taking place at halls but action can not be taken against the culprits as the victims do not file any complaint to the hall authorities.

"If we receive complaint, we will go for proper action against the persons who are compelling the residents to join political programmes against their will," said Prof. Harun-or-Rashid, Provost of Sir AF Rahman Hall.

He said students should not hesitate to file complaints against the culprits if any such incident takes place.

"Forcing general students to participate in political programmes is no doubt a heinous crime. But we are yet to get any such complaint," said Prof. See Page 12 Col 1

Shibir goes on rampage at CMCH: Cop shot

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Apr 11: A tense situation is prevailing at the CMC as Shibir activists went on the rampage after arrest of its leader today.

A constable was shot by the Shibir activists during the rampage, police said.

Meanwhile, Islami Chhatra Shibir announced to boycott tomorrow's students union election at Chittagong Medical College (CMC) protesting arrest of its leader Abdullahel Kafi.

Shibir also called a strike at CMC tomorrow demanding immediate release of Kafi.

Kafi, a final year student of CMC, was arrested at 1 pm from the campus in connection with four criminal cases of murder, illegal toll collection and robbery.

Kafi, general secretary of Islami Chhatra Shibir, CMC unit, is contesting the CMC students union election for the post of vice president (VP), campus sources said. The election will be held tomorrow.

After his arrest, Shibir supporters went on the rampage on the campus and put up barricades on the road from Prabartak to Chawkbazar in front of CMC, Katalganj road and Chandanpura road in front of Chittagong College, police and witnesses said.

Police constable Abdul Aziz was shot by unruly activists in front of Chittagong College at about 2 pm, police sources said.

Aziz was admitted to hospital here for treatment. See Page 12 Col 3

Ctg Mayor retreats but warns

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Apr 11: Chittagong City Corporation Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury today demanded judicial inquiry into amassing of illegal wealth by customs officials.

The Mayor at a rally at the Laidighi Maidan in the afternoon also demanded trial of the corrupt customs officials by one month.

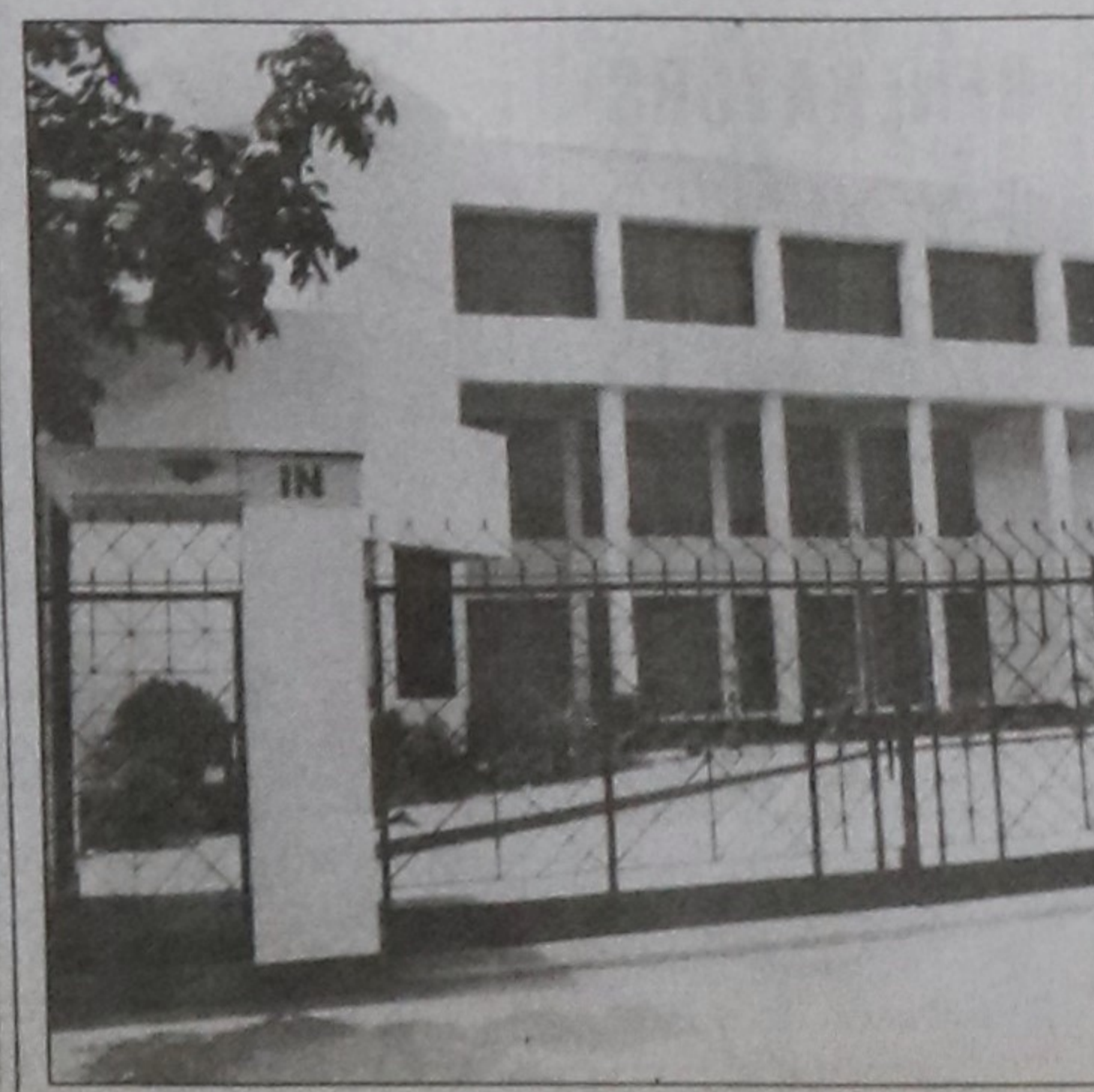
He however refrained from announcing the names of 49 corrupt officials at the rally.

Referring to the two-day strike by the customs officials here on March 5 and 6, Chowdhury said the government was deprived of a revenue of Tk 70 crore due to it. He also demanded investigation into the

See Page 12 Col 3

Dhaka to seek EU help to set up new jute body

By Mustak Hossain



The IJO headquarters at Monipuripara in the city. —Star photo

Bangladesh will launch a diplomatic offensive for international cooperation to promote jute and jute products. Liquidation of the International Jute Organisation (IJO) is not the end of cooperation, State Minister for Jute A.K. Faezul Huq told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Bangladesh will persuade the European Union to extend cooperation for formation of a body on jute and jute products. In fact, they have already expressed their willingness in this regard", he said.

Editorial on page 4

The State Minister said all IJO members are going to sit for a discussion in Dhaka in June to evolve a 'new and appropriate cooperation scheme for interested parties'.

The Dhaka-based IJO got liquidated yesterday as its policy-making body, the International Jute Council, failed to conclude a 'successor instrument' on Monday in the face of opposition from its 15 EU members on the plea that it failed to promote trade on jute

See page 11 col 6



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