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Five held for blocking traffic on road

Dacoity at Haji Selim's shop

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Apr 13: A joint team of district Detective Branch and Fatullah police today arrested five FIR-named accused in the case filed under PSA for blocking traffic on Dhaka-Narayanganj Road for more than six hours on Monday.

A sub-inspector of Fatullah thana filed the FIR. He mentioned the name of ruling party MP Haji Selim as instigator of the barricade programme that disrupted traffic on the road.

The MP instructed his men not to remove the barricade although senior police officials asked Haji Selim several times to have it removed. Rather, the lawmaker said, "The road blockade will continue until the robbers are caught," the complainant alleged in the FIR.

A gang of armed men allegedly got inside Madina Trading Corporation, the cement trading house of Haji Selim MP, at Munshikola in Fatullah and took away about Tk 15 lakh in cash around 1 pm on Monday. Following the incident, accomplices of Haji Selim and local traders put up a barricade on the road.

Meanwhile, the platoon commander of the Ansar camp which came under attack by

Opposition's 'demonstration day' Apr 20

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance yesterday congratulated the countrymen for observing the day-long hartal spontaneously and said people have again expressed their no-confidence in the government through making the shutdown a complete success.

Addressing a post-hartal press briefing at 29 Minto Road, the official residence of the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said the government has lost its

morality right to stay in power.

He announced that the alliance would observe country-wide 'Demonstration Day' on April 20 to protest deterioration of law and order and crisis of water, gas and electricity.

The alliance will hold a joint public meeting in Rangshahi city on April 25. BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Jatiya Party Chairman H M Ershad, Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Golam Azam and Islami Olyka Jote chief Atiqul Haq will address the rally.

Army to assist WASA in water distribution

Army personnel have been deployed in the city to assist the WASA in their water distribution programme yesterday, reports BSS.

Meanwhile, advance parties of the six contingents visited different areas of the city and the respective zonal offices yesterday. The Army personnel will monitor water distribution programme and take necessary steps in consultation with authorities concerned.

Army personnel also assisted the WASA last year and distributed pure drinking water among the city dwellers, an ISPR press release said.

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Prayer Timings

April 14

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5.00	5.30
Juma	12-15	1-20
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrrib	6-25	6-28
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

Demolition of illegal bldgs along highways continues

By Staff Correspondent

Police demolished several illegal buildings along the country's highways on the second day of the government's crackdown on toll collectors yesterday.

The drive focused on collection centres on the highways from Tongi to Mymensingh, Dhaka to Narshingdi, Sunamganj to Brammanbaria and Khulna to Jessore.

No incidents were reported during the demolition. The home minister gave workers until midnight Tuesday to remove illegal structures or face legal action.

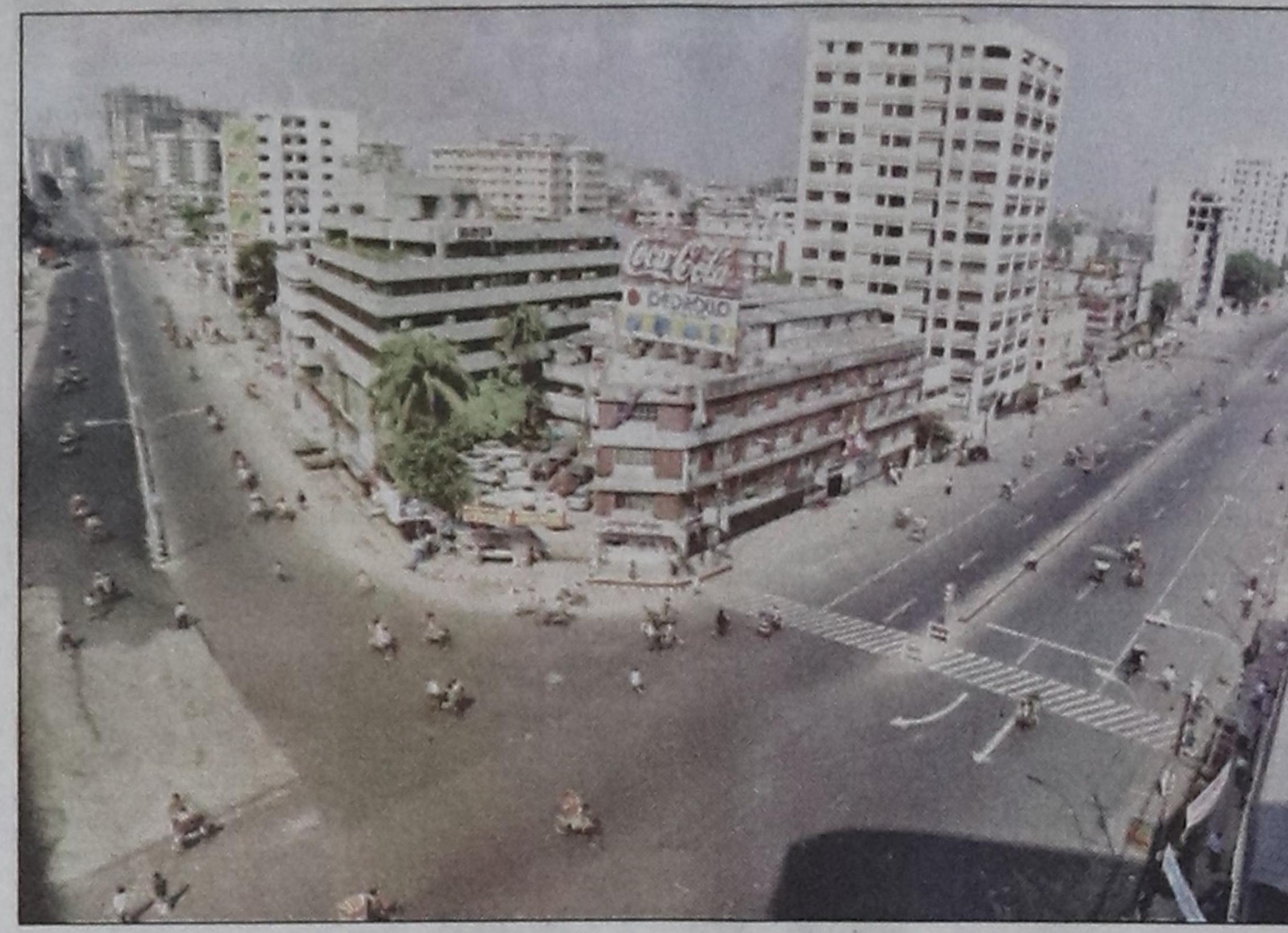
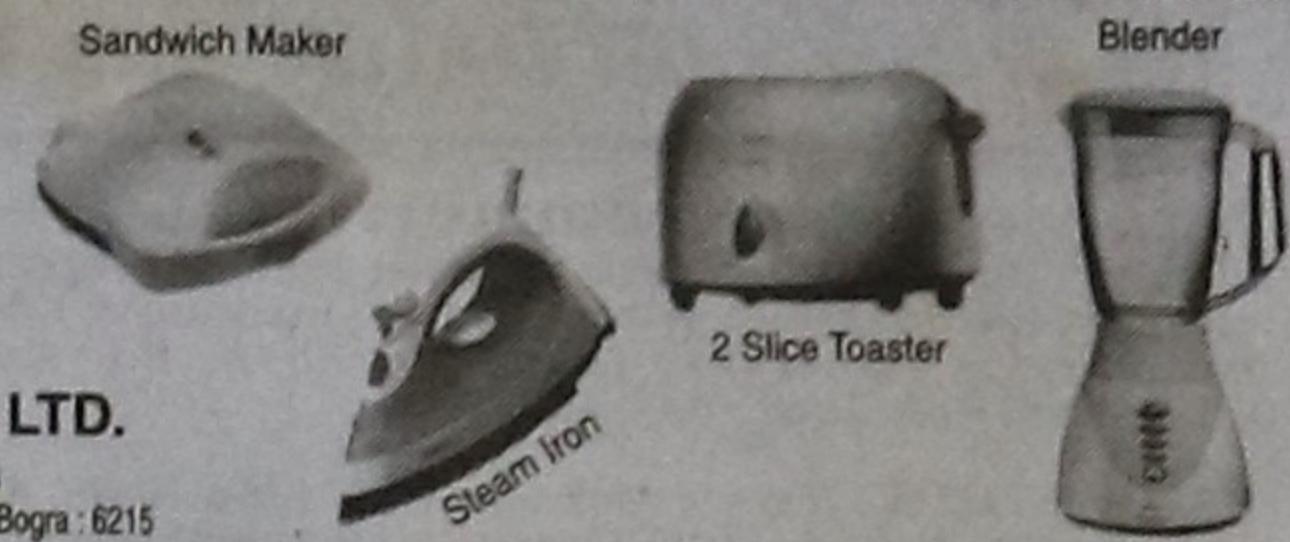
Police took steps to prevent serious traffic jams. The Bangladesh Rifles backed up police in all regions except Rangshahi.

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A barren Kakrail crossing typified the dawn-to-dusk hartal in the city yesterday.

Star photo: Sk. Enamul Haq

BSMMU still awaits report on prison wing

By Staff Correspondent

The hospital management committee of Bangabandhu Shiekh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) is yet to submit the probe report on its prison wing where a number of under trial prisoners have been staying for suspiciously long period allegedly in collusion with some doctors of the hospital, officials of the hospital said.

Prof. M. A. Kaderi, vice-chancellor of the university, earlier ordered the committee to launch an investigation following a Daily Star report on February 16 that four undertrial prisoners of Dhaka Central Jail (DCJ) were staying for the wing for months and even for years.

BSMMU has so far sent one of the four prisoners back to DCJ since the report was published. Aziz Ahmed Michel alias Titu, a notorious criminal of the city and an accused in a number of murder cases, was sent back to the jail on February 19 after he stayed at the wing for eight month and ten days.

Rejoinders & our reply

Retired Secretary T Hussain has contested a report published in The Daily Star on April 6 under the headline, "2 six-storey buildings escape demolition."

Hussain said he has valid documents for Plot-314 at Dhamondi (Road No. 15a). The plot has not encroached the Dhamondi lake and this has been admitted and confirmed in writing by the Housing and Works Department, he said. The report that "the building in the plot occupies more than half of Dhamondi lake, narrowing the lake to just 15 feet," is not correct.

"According to the Master Plan of Dhamondi Residential Area, made in April 1956, the lake adjacent to Plot-314 was really very narrow at that time as it is now and Plot-314 was wholly outside the configuration of the lake," Hussain said.

Our Reply: In the report, The Daily Star did not dispute the validity of documents of T Hussain's plot. Although DCC included Plot-314 at Road 26 (Road 15a) in its initial list of

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French aid flow down to trickle

By Rafiq Hasan

Bangladesh did not get French assistance for development projects over the last two years though France sits in the development partners' meet in Paris every year which decides the volume of aid for the country.

Finance ministry sources said the government of France did not provide any grant or financial assistance for development projects in Bangladesh for the last two years due to a major change in its foreign aid policy.

Bilateral negotiations for financial assistance to Bangladesh also remained suspended since 1998 for the policy change.

France, however, continued to provide food aid to Bangladesh and the volume is around 25,000 tonnes a year, worth about 4.75 million US dollars. Earlier, it provided financial assistance of over 60 million dollars annually. The latest French commitment for project aid was for 42 million dollars in 1998, the sources said.

When contacted, a top official in the finance ministry said the French government

has reduced financial assistance to Bangladesh recently. It is not only France, but many other European countries are also diverting their aid to other regions.

A significant aspect is that the French government while providing aid is now preferring countries which were their colonies in the past, he noted.

A Trade Commission official at the French Embassy in Dhaka admitted that French bilateral assistance to Bangladesh remained suspended since 1998, but its contribution to on-going projects was continuing.

The official, however, could not say how many French assisted projects in Bangladesh were at the implementation stage. He only referred to Saidabad Water Treatment Project in the city.

He said Bangladesh government can take supplies from France as it has an export credit programme of 250 million Franc.

French government recently expressed willingness to support Dhaka Telephone Expansion Project.

But the terms and conditions of the loans are not acceptable, an official said.

Iktedar Ahmed made LC Secretary

By Staff Correspondent

Iktedar Ahmed, District and Sessions Judge of Sunamganj, has been made Secretary of the Law Commission, according to sources.

Meanwhile, Sunamganj District Bar Association has called for keeping Ahmed in his present post till he completes his tenure.

The call was made in a resolution adopted unanimously at an emergency meeting of the Association yesterday, chaired by its President Bazlul Majid Khasru, a message received in Dhaka said.

The resolution said during Ahmed's 14-month stay here as judge, tens of thousands of people in the district have regained confidence in the judiciary.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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Boat tragedy leaves 56 killed in Philippines

ZAMBOANGA, Philippines, Apr 13: A Philippine boat bound for Malaysia with scores of unauthorized passengers aboard capsized, killing at least 56 people, officials said today. More than 100 others were missing and feared dead, reporters said.

There was no immediate report of whether foreigners were on board.

The ship then picked up scores of passengers at sea from small boats, he said. They apparently boarded from the same side, causing the ship to tilt.

Many passengers were trapped inside the ship's cabin after it capsized, officials said.

"We are still searching for the more than 100 passengers who are still missing," Tan said. "We don't know if they are alive or dead."

Coast guard district commandant Capt. Heliberto Pascual said the boat was only authorized to carry cargo, not passengers. When it was cleared for departure from Jolo it had only nine crew members and 11 cargo agents on board, he said.

This is a cargo vessel, not a ferry," Pascual said.

About 100 fishermen in the area were helping the navy search for the missing passengers, he said.

The ferry was headed for the Philippine province of Tawi-Tawi and then for Saba in Malaysia, he said.

There were no immediate reports of whether foreigners were on board.

Ferries are the main form of transportation among the Philippines' more than 7,000 islands, but overcrowding and accidents are common. In the world's worst peacetime shipping disaster, the Dona Paz collided with a tanker on December 20, 1987, killing 4,341.

Hartal halts civic life

From Page 1

to the office and its adjoining areas during the whole day.

Witnesses said police suddenly attacked Uttara thana BNP procession when it came out on the street near Azampur Bus Stand in the morning. Three persons were injured there and one person Jashim, was arrested from the spot.

The law enforcers resorted to lathi charge on Mirpur thana BNP procession at Darul-Salam when it was proceeding towards Gabtali. City BNP Vice President Elkashuddin Molla and more than a dozen activists were injured in the police action.

Police said pro hartal pickets damaged two auto-tempo and two minibuses at Kaliyapur at about 8.45am. Pickets also damaged a tempo at Malibagh crossing.

A procession of Mohamadpur thana BNP came under attack at Shankar bus stand in the morning. BNP alleged that the attackers belonged to the ruling Awami League and police protected them. Five activists were injured in the attack and two BNP workers were picked up by police from the spot.

Another procession, brought out by Jatiyatabadi Basturha Dal, was attacked near Tikatoli crossing. BNP said five of its activists were wounded in the attack.

Movement of vehicles on the city streets was thin during the hartal hours. However, movement of rickshaw was almost normal.

Shops, business establishments, educational institutions and private offices remained closed on the day. Attendance in the Secretariat and government offices was less than normal.

During the hartal period, the four components of the alliance-- BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Olyka Jote-- and Jagga and some other smaller parties brought out a series of processions in different parts of the city.

BNP brought out a number of big processions in Naya Paltan, Shahjahanpur, Mouchak, Dhamondi, New market, Mirpur and Jatrabari areas.

A large number of leaders and activists of BNP and its

Bio-gas Pilot Plant Project

Institute of Fuel Research and Development

Dr Qudrat-e-Khuda Road, Dhamondi

BCSIR

Dhaka-1205

Allocation of Taka 5000 for those who are interested in setting up Bio-gas Plant

The government of Bangladesh has taken up a Development Project titled 'Bio-gas Pilot Plant Project' in Institute of Fuel Research and Development at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (Science Laboratory) to solve the fuel crisis, organic fertiliser and preservation of organic cycle maintenance of ecological balance, development of health and environment, expansion of bio-gas as the alternative fuel. 5000 bio-gas plants across the country will be set up under this project. Preference for setting up bio-gas plant will be given to those who have the family consisting of 8-10 members and have a farm of at least 5-6 cattle or poultry farm (400-500 poultry birds). A bio-gas plant with the capacity of producing 3 cubic metre gas daily on the basis of cow-dung of 5-6 cows or excrement of 450 poultry birds can be used for cooking twice daily and for lighting a hajak at night. Such a plant will cost 12-14 thousand taka. Taka 5,000/- (five thousand) will be given as subsidy for setting up each plant under the project. This facility will be given till June 2000. Any branch of Sonali, Janata, Agrani and Krishi Bank may be contacted for additional finance for setting up plant for loan on soft terms.

In order to provide technical assistance for setting up such plants a total of 128 Sub-Assistant Engineers have been appointed across the country. Each Sub-Assistant Bio-gas Engineer has been entrusted with the responsibility of setting up bio-gas plant in 3-4 thanas. Entrepreneurs interested in setting up plant are requested to contact the Sub-Assistant Bio-gas Engineers appointed at thana level. Office of the Thana Nirbahi Officer/Office of the Thana Livestock Officer/Office of the Thana Public Health Engineering Department/Office of the Thana Agriculture Extension Officer/Office of the Local Government Engineering Department and the Office of BRAC can be contacted for the address of the Sub-Assistant Bio-gas Engineer for making contact. An entrepreneur may write to the undersigned, if he so desires. In that case the words 'Application for providing assistance to set up plant' will have to be written on the envelope. If anybody willing to set up a plant under Bio-gas Pilot Plant Project does not receive Tk 5000/- (five thousand) of the allocation, then he is requested to send a written complaint to the undersigned.