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Home Minister says City's illegal bus terminals, toll collection centres will be demolished

Home, Post and Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim said yesterday the government will soon set deadline for removing illegal bus terminals and toll collection structures from Dhaka city, reports BSS.

"All the illegal bus terminals and toll collection structures would be demolished if they are not removed within the deadline", he said while addressing a seminar on "Be Organized for New Millennium" here.

"We have decided to remove illegal bus terminals and toll collection structures from Dhaka city after stopping toll collection from roads and highways. The demolition drive will also be launched across the country."

Organised by Bangladesh Truck Drivers Federation, the function was also addressed by its general secretary Roy Ramesh Chandra, Bangladesh Truck Owners Association general secretary Rustam Ali, BI-WTC Workers Union President Sukkur Mahmud and Bengal Tank-Lorry Stramik Union general secretary Shahjahan Siraj. Nasim said the government will also fix timeframe to recover land from encroachment and demolish slums in Dhaka city immediately.

A trend has been developed in Dhaka city to encroach upon land and build slums overnight.

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Inside Today

Article

An Anti-Christian Pogrom?

Column: Between the Lines
by Kuldip Nayar
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CRICKET PEPSI

Miles perform during a live concert at Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Pepsi and BCB organised the concert celebrating Bangladesh's elevation as a Test nation. —Star photo

Some TU leaders allegedly fuelling unrest at CEPZ

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, June 30: Labour unrest is threatening operation of 13 towel factories with a total investment of about 15 million US dollars in Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ).

A senior official of CEPZ requesting anonymity said, about 8,000 workers of the towel factories are agitating for higher wages as per the 1993 circular, kept in abeyance by BEPZA (Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority).

The workers are now being paid as per the 1989 circular,

under which an unskilled worker gets a minimum wage of 20 US dollars per month.

The official said the unrest began about two months back and the workers are now on a go-slow, hampering production. They are being instigated by some trade union leaders from outside the CEPZ, he said.

Those trade union leaders want to utilise the unrest as a trump-card to introduce trade union activity at CEPZ by taking advantage of the US pressure.

Production at three towel

factories of US company Qualitex Group is suspended for 15 days now as the workers abstained from duties demanding reinstatement of 15 workers and payment of wages as per the 1993 circular.

Some workers also observed hunger strike for two days.

Sheikh Abdul Nukif, Sales Manager of Modern Towel, a unit of Qualitex Group, talking to this correspondent said, "Due to labour unrest we were forced to shift export orders worth

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Live concert Unruly youths batoned: 25 injured

By Staff Correspondent

At least 25 people were hurt when police used batons to prevent youths from forcibly entering Bangabandhu National Stadium where a live concert was going on yesterday evening, police and witnesses said.

The injured included six policemen.

Daily Star journalist Nafid Imran Ahmed was severely injured when police charged inside Baitul Mukarram mosque to beat those who took shelter there.

The concert began at 7 pm. It was suspended for about 45 minutes from about 7:30 pm when people hurled water bottles at police, complaining in inadequate sound system.

The concert was organised by Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) in cooperation with PEPSI as part of celebrations for Bangladesh's gaining the Test status.

The audience got enraged when they failed to hear properly the popular band group Miles.

Some people pelted stone at police at the eastern gallery at about 10:20 p.m. Police threw those back.

While the trouble continued

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Ctg port

Cargo handling continues despite holiday

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, June 30: Cargo handling at Chittagong Port continued today despite holiday, port sources said.

Measures have been taken for round the clock operation of the port which suffered disruption due to strike by stevedores and dock workers on two occasions in the last one week.

Movement of ship at the port channel was normal today.

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Rajuk for revoking its chairman's power to overrule Master Plan

By Morshed Ali Khan

Rajuk would propose amendment to the Town Improvement Act 1953 with suggestion to remove the discretionary power of its chairman to overrule the Dhaka Master Plan and approve building plans, Rajuk sources said.

The suggestion is being made as it was found that over the years, the discretionary power was 'indiscriminately abused' by successive chairmen of Rajuk. In many cases, powerful people with political backing 'forced' the chairmen to approve building plans in sites designated for open spaces, parks or lakes in the Master Plan.

The sources said Rajuk would suggest that discretionary power to overrule the Master Plan be vested with the Minister for Housing and Public Works. This has however caused alarm among the planners and they feel that discretionary power should be given

to a committee comprising public representatives and experts from the BUET.

"We need the experts to analyse and give their views on environmental, social, ecological and other impacts whenever to overrule the Master Plan," said a senior town planner.

Another town planner and architect said if the Minister is given discretionary power, "The situation would be no different." Moreover, he is likely to this power for political gains.

The Master Plan was incorporated in the Town Improvement Act 1953 through a gazette notification on August 3, 1997. It is mandatory to follow the Master Plan which is also known as Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan. The Master Plan was devised by local and foreign experts over a period four years at a cost of about Tk 16 crore. It specifies a thoroughly professional guideline for develop-

ment of the 590 square mile city area under Rajuk's jurisdiction.

Rajuk's Member Administration and Land Bayelot Hosain told The Daily Star that the amendment proposal would be made to bring new Paurashavas under Rajuk's jurisdiction. A committee is now finalising the proposal and it will be sent to the Ministry of Housing and Public Works, he said.

Experts on the Master Plan said the committee should closely study its contents and suggest amendments. There are so many new things in the plan and these must be taken into consideration while proposing amendments to the Act which defends it legally, one of them noted.

"The authorities should act fast to bring changes in the law to protect the Master Plan and save the city from degradation," he said.

Delhi to consider Kashmir's autonomy demand: Vajpayee

NEW DELHI, June 30: Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said the demand for autonomy passed this week by the state assembly of Jammu-Kashmir was within the Constitution and his government will consider it, news agencies reported today, says AP.

"The autonomy resolution is within the Indian constitution," Press Trust of India quoted Vajpayee as telling reporters aboard his plane while returning home after visits to Italy and Portugal.

State lawmakers belonging

to Vajpayee's party had walked out of the local legislature in protest when it approved a plan to return the state to its pre-1953 status, when Jammu-Kashmir had its own president and prime minister.

The main opposition Congress party also opposed the autonomy demand by the National Conference Party, which governs Jammu-Kashmir and is an ally of Vajpayee's national coalition.

The autonomy resolution demanded that New Delhi should only control defence,

foreign affairs, communications and currency.

Arch rival Pakistan and militant groups within Kashmir dismissed the autonomy demand as an Indian ploy to avoid giving the right of self-determination to the Kashmiri people as promised in a 1948 United Nations resolution.

Vajpayee also said today that the government would make efforts to open a dialogue with the All Party Hurriyat Conference, an umbrella organisation of Kashmiri political

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June	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
June 1		6-30pm
July 2	5-15 am	

Prayer Timings

July 1		
Azhan	4-15	4-45
Fajr	1-00	1-20
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-50	6-55
Esha	8-15	8-45

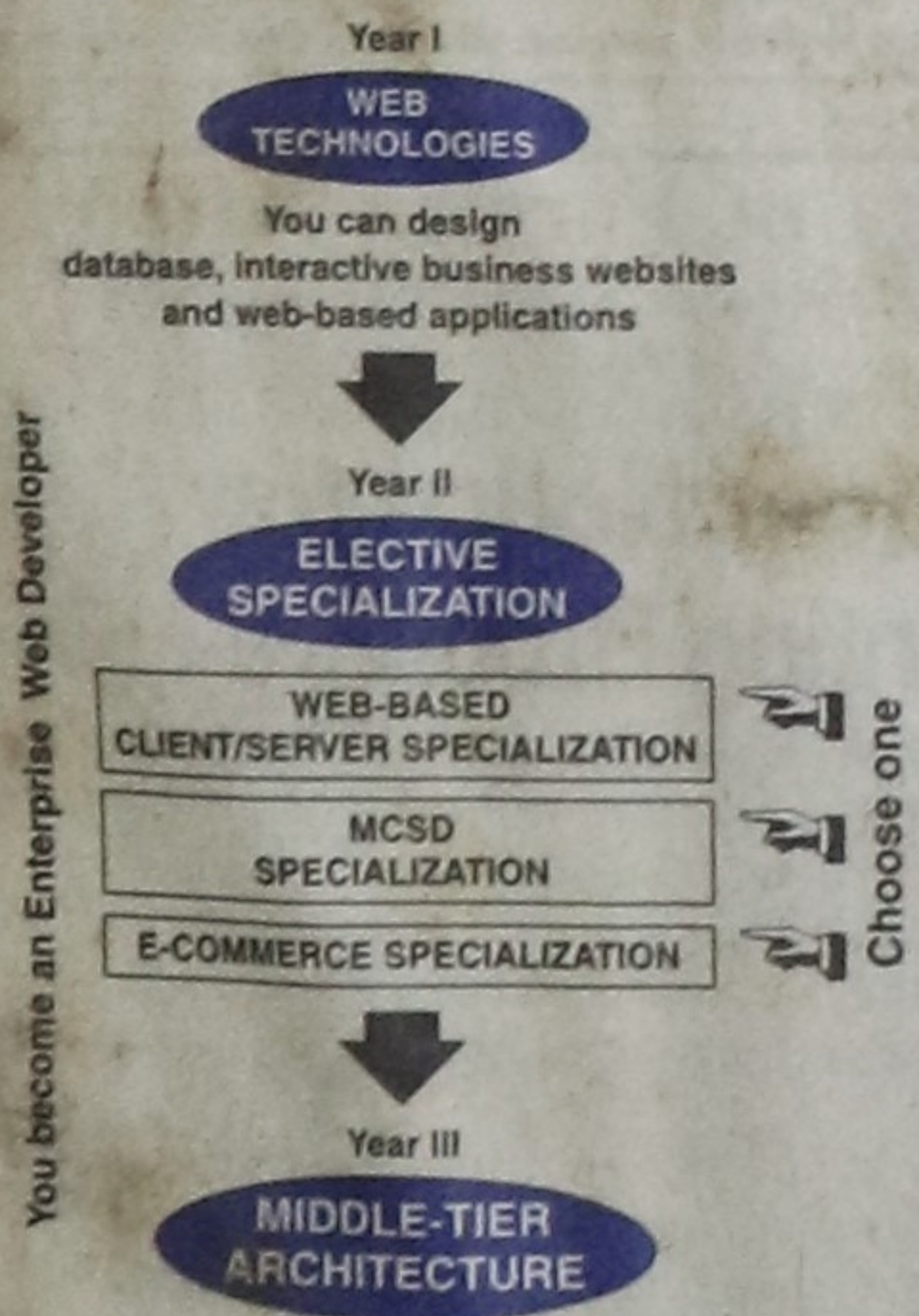
Source: Islamic Foundation

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