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Food poisoning: 200 fall sick in Nilphamari

NILPHAMARI, July 4: About 200 people fell sick due to food poisoning during a religious festival at Cherenga Dolpara village in Jaldhaka upazila today, reports UNB.

At least 118 of them, mostly attacked with diarrhoea, were admitted to Jaldhaka Upazila Health Complex, the Civil Surgeon said.

"Condition of 50 people, including some children, is critical," hospital sources said.

Witnesses said the people fell sick after taking "rosad" distributed among 1,000 devotees on the occasion of Mohadev Puja, a Hindu religious festival, at a local temple on Monday.

Shimul discloses how he managed to get out of Khulna jail in '97

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, July 4: Arrested leader of outlawed BPCP Mahmud Hasan Shimul said he had managed a false medical certificate from Khulna District Jail in 1997.

He said the medical officer who gave the certificate strongly recommended for his medical treatment abroad.

"With the help of this false medical certificate I managed to get out of Jessore Central Jail. I also showed a forged bail order of the High Court, Shimul told Khulna district police on Sunday.

Shimul was awarded 40 years RI in connection with the murder of Inam Ghazi of Dumuria. The verdict was pronounced in 1991.

Shimul further disclosed to police that a businessman of Khulna Metropolitan City provided money to BPCP armed cadres for murdering some political leaders during the last four years.

Meanwhile, former MP Abdul Gaffar Biswas has denied link with Shimul.

"I am yet to know who is Shimul," he said this through a press statement.

"I have a lot of licensed firearms, but not a single illegal one," he said.

Refuting allegations about his involvement in drug trafficking, the former MP said, "I have inherited vast land property from my father in addition to my huge earning through legal business. So, question of drug trafficking does not arise at all."

He blamed police for harbouring drug traffickers and arms traders.

Sramik Dal calls off today's strike at Ctg port

CHITTAGONG, July 4: Chittagong Bandar Sramik Dal today called off their tomorrow's scheduled strike at the port as the authority convened a preparatory meeting for a new CBA election, reports UNB.

The strike was called demanding election to the Collective Bargaining Agent (CBA) of port workers as the tenure of present CBA expired in January last.

The strike was withdrawn after Joint Labour Director Office called a meeting with Port Authority and four labour organisations on July 16 to take preparation for the CBA election.

2 shops looted at Shaheb Bazar in Rajshahi

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, July 4: At least five people were injured and two shops looted by a group of terrorists at Shaheb Bazar in the city this noon.

The terrorists suddenly attacked two shops, beat up the salesmen and looted cloths.

Other shopowners and salesmen in the market rushed to the spot and chased the gang. They caught one of the gang members, identified as Ripon, 35, and beat him mercilessly.

Later the shopowners handed Ripon over to the police. A case was filed with Boalia thana in this connection.

The shopowners' association in a press release has threatened to launch a greater movement if the terrorists were not arrested within a week.

Erratum

It was inadvertently mentioned in a news item published in The Daily Star yesterday under the headline 'Haripur power plant likely to start partial operation from June next' that the power plant in fact, the gas will be supplied by the Petrobangla.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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Bangabandhu murder trial

HC to give its order on 'paper book' today

The High Court is expected to give its order on the crucial 'paper book' issue today as the defence said it was "incomplete" claiming several relevant papers of the Bangabandhu murder trial were not incorporated in the document, reports BSS.

The court yesterday witnessed a lengthy debate on the defence plea when the prosecution said several documents, as asked by the defence, were "inadvertently" omitted in the document while some others were not 'incorporated' thinking those to be unnecessary for the trial.

Meanwhile, the defence lawyers continued to read out the depositions and cross-examinations of witnesses from the trial court proceedings as part of their arguments for the fourth day yesterday of the appeal hearing in the High Court bench comprising Justice Mohammad Rulul Amin and Justice A B M Khairul Haque.

Khan Saifur Rahman, counsel for convict lieutenant colonel (sacked) Syed Farook Rahman and ex-lieutenant colonel Mohi-

uddin Ahmed, said he brought to the notice of the court of the "missing documents" as he needed access to the "missing documents" so that he could refer to those during his appeal arguments.

But, the lawyer for convict ex-major Bazul Huda, Advocate Mahbubur Rahman MP, demanded reconstruction of the paper book incorporating the documents including the proceedings of the magistrate (CMM) court claiming that the entire case was based on those papers.

The defence had earlier demanded incorporation of the missing documents in the paper book during the trial of the case in the Dhaka District and Sessions Judge Court, which in 1998, sentenced 15 former army officials out of the 19 accused to death acquitting four of them.

Special Public Prosecutor Serajul Haq, who was cleared by the High Court to conduct the case rejecting a defence plea on Monday, was present. But

Advocate Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik, Deputy Attorney General, took part in the debate on behalf of the prosecution.

Only four of the 15 condemned killers, all former army officials, are in jail to face the trial as the rest are absconding since Awami League returned to power.

The convicts facing the trial in person are sacked lieutenant colonels Syed Farook Rahman, Sultan Shariar Rashid Khan, Mohiuddin Ahmed (artillery) and ex-Major Bazul Huda.

The absconding convicts are sacked lieutenant colonels Khondokar Abdur Rashid, Shariful Haque Dalim and A M Rashed Chowdhury, former lieutenant colonels Mohiuddin Ahmed (Lancer), S H B M Noor Chowdhury and Abdul Aziz Pasha, former Major Shariful Hossain alias Shariful Hossain, sacked captain Kishmat Hashem, former captains Nazmul Hossain Ansar and Abdul Mazed and former Risalder Mosleh Uddin.

News Analysis

More powers for all but Kashmir

NEW DELHI, July 4: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah's demand for greater autonomy for the state his National Conference Party rules appears to have rekindled the old debate on the sensitive issue of power-sharing between the states and the centre in a federal set-up in India.

The demand for greater financial, executive and legislative powers for the states is almost as old as independent India itself. For several years since India's freedom in 1947, the Congress party not only ruled the country but also most of the states.

As a result, it was easier for the Congress high command to keep under leash initial muffled voices for greater more powers for the states.

As Congress' hold declined over the decades and the political space was grabbed by more and more regional parties, the

noise for autonomy grew increasingly louder. So much so that the Congress federal government under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had to set up in the eighties a commission headed by Justice Sarkaria on relations between the state government and the federal administrations.

Some of BJP's present regional allies like DMK in Tamil Nadu, TDP in Andhra Pradesh and Akali Dal in Punjab had in the past voiced their demands for greater powers to the states.

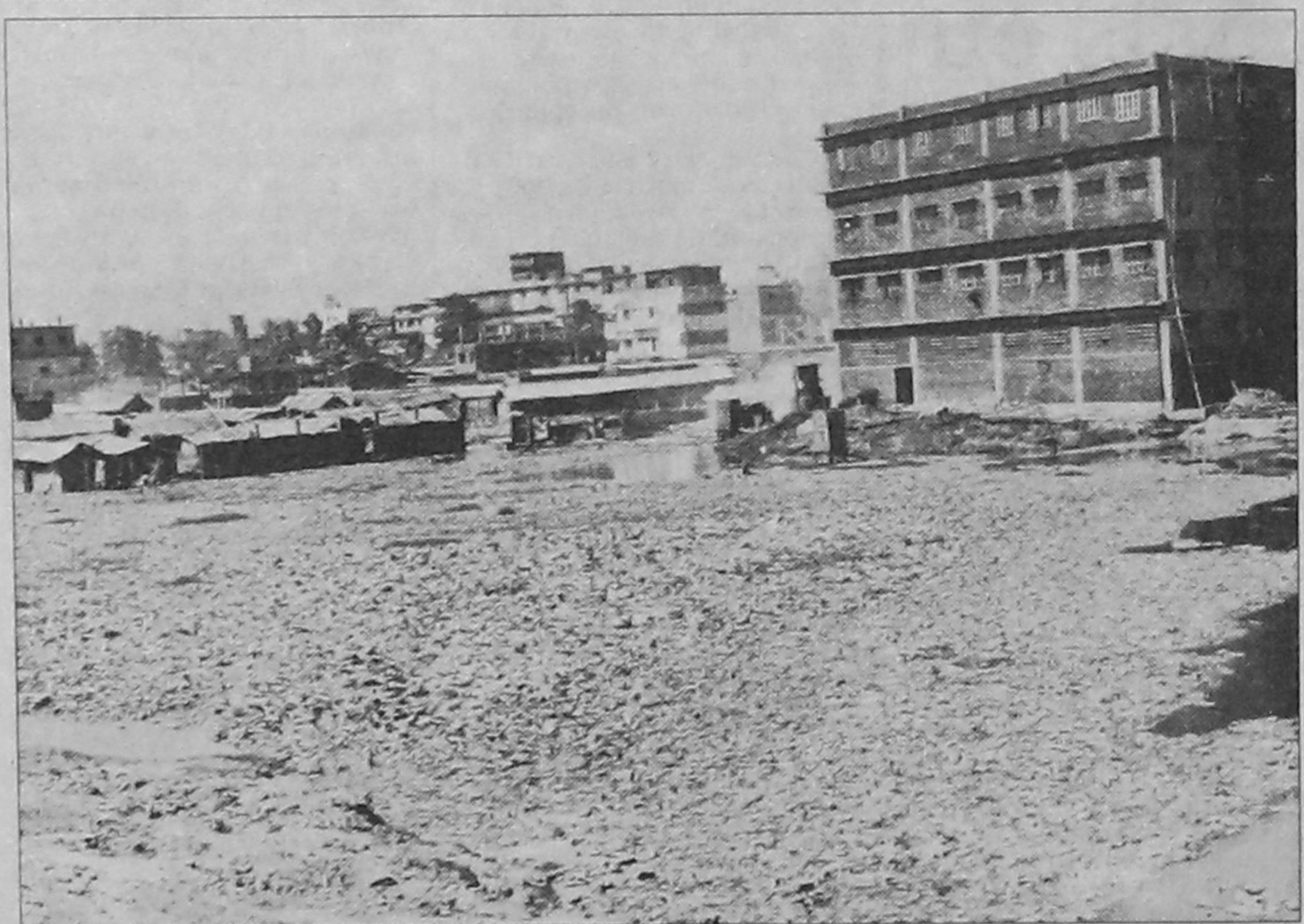
The autonomy demand in the past in North Eastern India had led to the adoption of Article 244(A) under which the state of Meghalaya was created out of Assam. The state enjoys special provisions as a tribal region. Two autonomous councils - in the Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hill Districts - were subsequently formed in Assam under the constitutional provi-

sion. The emergence of regional parties at the cost of national parties like Congress and BJP served to highlight this issue especially in the backdrop of increasing aspirations for a share in the power cake.

While the regional parties in certain states have defined their concept of autonomy in terms of devolution of more powers for the state governments, the demand for greater autonomy by the National Conference, under the leadership of Farooq Abdullah and earlier his father Sheikh Abdullah, have had serious implication for India's national integrity and security.

The BJP itself publicly favours devolution of powers to the states but opposes tooth and nail the autonomy resolution passed by Jammu and Kashmir

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Tannery waste in city's Rayerbazar area poses a serious health hazard for the residents there.

— Star photo

3 terrorists held with arms in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, July 4: Three terrorists were arrested by Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) today, reports BSS.

Police also recovered one US made point 9 mm pistol, nine bullets and a microburst left by miscreants in front of Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

Acting on a tip-off, detectives of CMP raided a house at Madya Halishahar and arrested terrorists Muhammad Hanif alias Senikka, 22, Muhammad Shafi, 23, and Muhammad Shafique, 19. One light gun, four cartridges and three bullets were also recovered from their possession. The terrorists were preparing for committing a dacoity in Halishahar area, police said.

Repatriation uncertain 369 Myanmar nationals languishing in jails

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, July 4: Repatriation of 369 Myanmar nationals who have already completed their terms of imprisonment has become uncertain due to lack of clearance from Myanmar's border guards NASAKA, said a government source.

They were arrested in the last ten years on charges of illegal fishing, poaching and trespassing and are now languishing in the jails in Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Noakhali, Comilla and Mymensingh, the source added.

On May 12 this year, 108 Myanmar nationals who completed jail terms here were pushed back into their homeland following an inconclusive flag meeting between the border guard officials of the two neighbouring countries at Teknaf point, the source said.

The Myanmar border guard officials declined to take back 369 nationals as they could not

yet verify and confirm their identities, the source further said.

BDR authorities lodged protests with NASAKA in this regard, but no clearance has so far been received against those 369 people, sources concerned.

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Two hundi traders arrested in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, July 4: CID police arrested two hundi businessmen with some hundi slips and Tk three lakh from in front of a Janata Bank branch in the city's Tedy Bazar today, reports UNB.

Police said the CID officers challenged Mohammad Idris and Abdul Kashem while coming out of the bank at about 10:30 am and arrested them along with 18 hundi slips and some vouchers of false accounts.

4 bills passed without any discussion

Parliament passed four bills without any discussion yesterday, reports UNB.

The bills are: The Trust (Amendment) Bill, 2000, The Securities and Exchange Commission Bill, 2000, The Government Primary School Teachers Welfare Trust (Amendment) Bill, 2000 and The Investment Cooperation of Bangladesh (Amendment) Bill, 2000.

The House sent three bills to the standing committee concerned for scrutiny. The bills are the Rangamati Parbatya Zilla Parishad (Amendment) Bill, 2000, the Khagrachhari Parbatya Zilla Parishad (Amendment) Bill, 2000 and the Bandarban Parbatya Zilla Parishad (Amendment) Bill, 2000.

Dilip murder Two members of BPCP held in city

The Special Branch (SB) of police yesterday arrested two persons from the city's Paikpara area for their alleged involvement in the killing of Sramajibi Mukti Andolon leader Mir Ilias Hossain Dilip, reports BSS.

Acting on a tip off, a team of SB led by ASP Khalilur Rahman raided a house at Ahmed Nagar in Paikpara and arrested two alleged terrorists. They were identified as Julhas alias Julu and Mahub alias Batu.

Police said the arrested persons are the members of outlawed Purbabangla Communist Party and were involved in terrorist acts, including murder, extortion and looting in Jhenidah district for long time.

Police produced the arrested in the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Kazi Meraj Hossain and prayed for seven days' remand.

The magistrate granted four-day remand after hearing both the sides.

Shad Ershad appears before CMM's Court

By Court Correspondent

Shad Ershad, son of former president H M Ershad, appeared before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court yesterday.

Shad was accused of abducting a teenage girl. The next date for his appearance in the same court has been fixed on August 3.

He was arrested on March 4 on the basis of a case filed with Gulshan police by the victim's father. He was taken on a two-day remand.

Rare animal handed over to Ctg Zoo

By Staff Correspondent

A two-week-old civet, found by workers at an afforestation project in Bhatriy, Chittagong on Monday, has been handed over to Chittagong Zoo.

The cub had apparently strayed from its mother and was traumatised after losing its way back when workers found it. Engebert Grundemann, an official of Synergie Foundation, Bangladesh said yesterday.

The Foundation is working in Bhatriy to recreate the lost forests in the area, planting 40 species of trees on 350 acre at Southeastern Dakin Jangal where a python was found recently and handed over to the zoo.

Prime Minister tells JS A cell will be formed to implement PARC recommendations

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said a cell would be constituted to supervise the implementation of 137 recommendations made by Public Administration Reforms Commission to make the administration more efficient and dynamic, reports UNB.

Replying to a question from Tahura Ali (AL) during the PM's question hour in JS, Hasina said the Commission started functioning in January 1997 and submitted its first phase of final report in July last year. The report included 30 interim, 70 short-term and 37 long-term recommendations.

She told the House that the Commission's recommendations would be implemented in phases.

In reply to a supplementary from Mrs. Ali, the Prime Minister said the proposed cell would be formed with competent persons so that the recommenda-

tions could be executed effectively, but she would not say about the modality of its composition. She assured that a woman representative would be included in the cell.

Hasina said her government has already implemented several interim steps on priority basis to infuse dynamism into the administration.

The steps include accountability of the service sector, policy for promotion in senior posts, 2-day weekly holiday, application receiving centre at the Secretariat for quick settlement of various problems of the people, computer loan for government officials, setting computers and e-mail at divisional and district administrations to increase efficiency and amendment to Government Employees (Discipline and Appeal) Provisions, 1985 and Gov-

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Concern over congestion at Ctg Port CFTC proposes 5pc rise in container fare

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, July 4: Chittagong Feeder Trade Committee (CFTC), a Singapore-based organisation of feeder vessel operators, has expressed deep concern over congestion at Chittagong port.

CFTC in a fax message to the chairman of Chittagong port yesterday pointed out the overstay of vessels due to congestion at the port and urged CPA to take urgent measures to improve the situation, port sources said today.

Chittagong Port Authority sent a reply to CFTC saying the measures were already taken to overcome the congestion.

CPA in its reply pointed out that berths for container vessels were increased to six from five, four private straddle carriers brought in the jetty for use and some more private equipment would operate shortly to step up cargo handling opera-

tions, port sources said.

Chittagong port is facing congestion for more than one month forcing the vessels calling here to be delayed for 10 to 15 days on an average.

Port sources said rain, rough sea and increase in arrival of ships with the rise of trade activities, triggered the congestion of vessels at both the jetties and outer anchorage of Chittagong port.

UNB adds: The CFTC also proposed about 5 per cent rise in container fare effective from July 26.

A CFT circular today said additional charge on container was imposed in view of price hike of furnace oil.

It said additional charge of US \$ 24 is to be paid for 20-feet container and US \$ 48 for 40-feet container.

Sharply reacting to the proposed rise, the port sources

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Agri subsidy to continue despite objection from donors: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said in parliament that her government would continue subsidy to agriculture sector despite objection from donors, reports UNB.

She also assured that there would not be any problem for peasants as long as Awami League is in power.

"I didn't accept the World Bank's condition while I was in the Opposition. Despite their objections, I am giving subsidy to agriculture... If donors don't give any fund, I will give it from our own resources," the Prime Minister said responding to a question from Abdul Latif Mirza.

Hasina said her government gave subsidy amounting to Tk 411 crore for fertiliser import in past four years. Unfortunately the past BNP government did not give any substantial subsidy to the agriculture sector, she said.

The Prime Minister said Tk 100 crore has been earmarked in the new budget for fiscal 2000-2001 as subsidy for fertiliser. The amount may vary depending on demand.

Giving a breakup of fertiliser subsidy, she said Tk 162 crore was given in 1996-97, Tk 122 crore in 1997-98, Tk 27 crore in 1998-99 and Tk 100 crore in 1999-2000.

The Prime Minister said the Begum Khaleida Zia's government provided a nominal Tk 1.5 crore as subsidy in 1991-92 and 92-93. As a matter of fact, she said, 18 farmers were gunned down by the BNP government for demanding fertiliser.

Ctg Mass Killing Deposition of 7 witnesses complete

CHITTAGONG, July 4: Two more witnesses of the Chittagong mass killing case made depositions as the hearing began at Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge Court here today after 25 days, reports UNB.

The witnesses who made their depositions are Kazi Shahabuddin Ahmed and Ishak Dukhu Miah, who were then OCs of Kotwali and Chandgaon thanas respectively. With them, seven witnesses completed their depositions.

Seven accused in the case were present during the hearing.

Judge A M M Sayed rejected an application questioning the validity of PP Kamaluddin's appearance in the case. The application was submitted by Ehsanul Haq Hena, counsel for the accused.

In their depositions, the two witnesses claimed their efforts to save the then Leader of the Opposition, Sheikh Hasina during indiscriminate firing on January 24, 1988.

Bodies of those who were killed on the day were burnt under the supervision of Patrolling Officer GC Mondol in a bid to destroy the evidences, they added.

PPP demands early polls

ISLAMABAD, July 4: Former Pakistani prime minister Benazir Bhutto's top aide, Makhdoom Anis Fahim, met military ruler General Pervez Musharraf today and demanded an end to political victimisation, party officials said, reports AFP.

Fahim, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) vice chairman, also reiterated the party's demand for early elections.