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Vajpayee won't meet Musharraf during UN summit in NY

NEW DELHI, Aug 27: Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee will not meet Pakistani military ruler Gen. Pervez Musharraf on the sidelines of a UN summit in New York, India's ambassador to the United States said yesterday, reports AP.

"No, no meeting is planned ... this has been overblown by the media," Ambassador Naresh Chandra told the private Star News television channel. "There is no prospect of such a meeting."

A meeting between Vajpayee and Musharraf would have been the first since the former Pakistani army chief took power in a coup in Islamabad and a near-war between the two South Asian enemies in the summer of 1998 in the mountains of northern Kashmir.

Vajpayee begins his 13-day tour of the United States on Sept 5 in New York. He will address the United Nations Millennium Summit on Sept 8 and will hold separate meetings with world leaders gathered at the UN headquarters.

Vajpayee, who is leading a high-powered delegation of Cabinet ministers, prominent lawmakers and business leaders, will address a joint session of the US Congress on Sept 14.

He is scheduled to meet US President Bill Clinton after a ceremonial reception at the White House on Sept 15. Vice President Al Gore will also host a lunch for Vajpayee.

Transfer: Ctg customs officials stage protest

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 27: Customs officials opposing the inter-departmental transfer staged a demonstration at Chittagong Custom House this morning protesting the government's move, sources said.

The agitating custom officials urged the government to withdraw the decision of inter-departmental transfer immediately.

Recently the government ordered transfer of over 70 customs officials of Chittagong Customs House. Such a large scale transfer order also created scare among custom officials.

Garments fire: Tk 5 lakh demanded for each victim

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Garments Workers Federation demanded Tk five lakh compensation for each of the 12 workers killed in a fire incident at a garments factory at Babani in the city yesterday.

In an emergency meeting, leaders of the federation alleged that the incident took place due to lack of safety measures.

The meeting, presided by its President Khurshid Alam, demanded formation of a BGMEA committee to monitor safety measures in garments factories.

The National Garments Workers Federation in a statement held the factory owners responsible for the incident and demanded Tk two lakh compensation for each of the dead and Tk 50 thousand for treatment of each of the injured workers.

Meanwhile, the BGMEA and the Fire Service and Civil Defence Department have initiated separate investigations into the incident. BGMEA will also carry out a survey on safety measures in garments factories, sources said.

Mizan Chowdhury gets bail in cheating case

By Court Correspondent

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka yesterday granted bail to former prime minister Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury in a cheating case.

Mizan Chowdhury is also chairman of a faction of Jatiya Party.

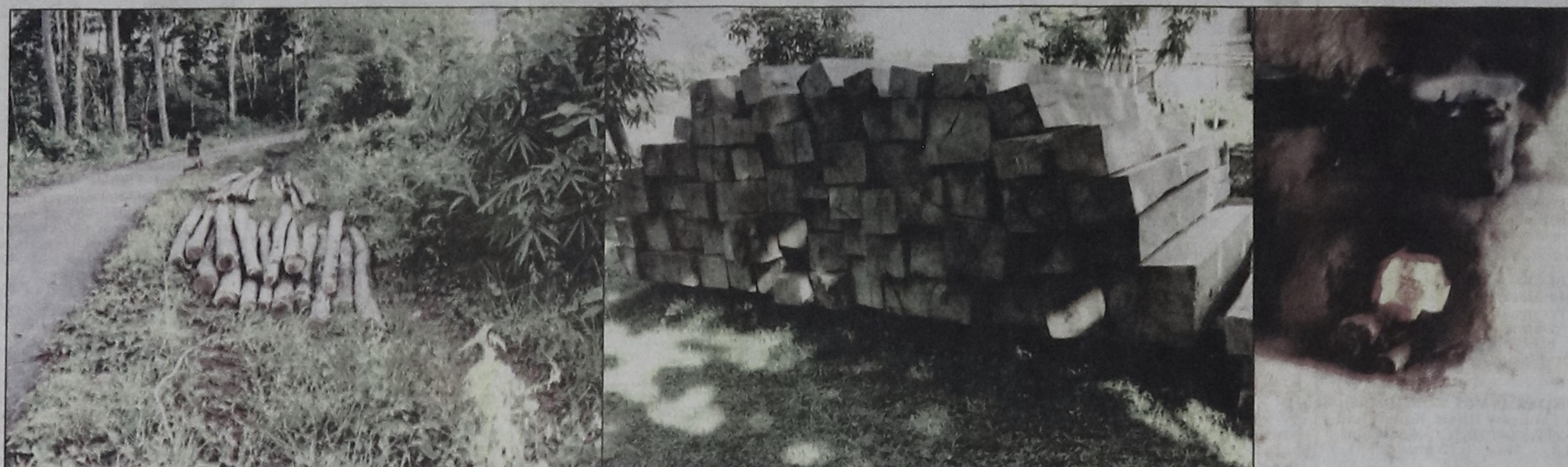
Barrister Abdullah Al-Mamun and Advocate Golam Sarwar Moni yesterday brought Mizan Chowdhury to the CMM's Court with a prayer for bail petition. After hearing both the sides the court granted him bail against bond of Tk 5,000.

Mizan Chowdhury along

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Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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Remains of a teak plantation of Forest Department at Baghaichhari in Rangamati: an illegal harvest of logs lies on the roadside for shipment (left), stacks of seized timber at Baghaichhari forest office (middle) and logs fuel the fire in the clay oven in a tea shop at Baghaichhari bazar (right). —Photo by Dr Ali Mohammad Ali Reza Khan (Story on page-1)

Leadership dispute

15 trade bodies kept out of FBCCI voter list

By M Shamsur Rahman

The election board of the Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) has kept 15 trade bodies out of its preliminary voter list due to leadership dispute in those.

Two committees in each of these organisations are claiming to represent these.

Of the organisations, five are chambers and 10 are associations, according to preliminary voter list of the FBCCI.

Business sources said many district chambers and associations remain inactive for most of the year but suddenly become busy before the biennial election of the apex trade body.

"So dispute over leadership often crops up before FBCCI election as their votes are deciding factors in the polls," a business leader said requesting anonymity.

The apex trade body had earlier sought applications from business organisations for preparing voter list for the election.

Leadership dispute also surfaced in Manikganj chamber as two committees submitted ap-

plications, resulting in dropping its name from the voter list.

Other chambers whose representatives could not become voters are Tangail, Bandarban, Jamalpur, Gaibandha, Gopalganj, Sunamganj, Pabna, Sirajganj, Laxmipur, Khagrachhari and Bhola chambers.

The associations whose representatives were not included in the voter list includes Paper Importers Association, Vegetables and Allied Product Exporters Association, Jewellery Association, Foreign Exchange Dealers Association, Bangladesh Association for Software and Information Service, Finished Leather Goods and Footwear Association, Bangladesh Poddar Samity, PVC Manufacturing Association, Chemist and Druggist Association, Marine Surveyors Association, Grocery Business Association, Sandmining and Merchants Association.

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