

## US embassy rejects 60 pc visa applications after Sept 11

**BSS, Chittagong**  
Officials of the US Embassy yesterday said the September 11 terrorist attack on the US had forced the authorities to bring major changes in the US immigration and visa policy.

"Inter-agency cooperation and coordination among the US Customs, Navy, Coastguards, FBI, and Immigration and Naturalisation Services (INS) have been intensified in this field," Richard Adams, chief of the consular section of the US Embassy in Dhaka, said at a press briefing in the port city.

Richard said many people were arrested in the US during the past decades on charges of criminal activities but most of them were

not Muslims, he said refuting the allegation that Muslims were being targeted in his country after the September 11 incident.

He admitted that the rate of visa refusal cases for Bangladeshi applicants had increased following the September 11 attack. About 22 thousand Bangladeshi visa applicants were denied entry clearance among a total of 35 thousand between September 2001 and September 2002.

Richard said 60-70 per cent visa applications were rejected in that period by the US Embassy in Dhaka which is almost double compared to corresponding period of the last year.

To a question, Richard said

roughly 7 to 11 million immigrants had been illegally staying in the USA.

Vice Consul Joe Mellott and Press Attache Karl Fritz also spoke at the briefing on US immigration and visa policy.

Richard said the September 11 attack had helped them to discover some institutional weaknesses and that major policy changes were necessitated to protect life and property of US citizens.

He said the attack on the US was a wake-up call for them not only to continue fight against smuggling of arms and drugs but also to combat terrorists.



**PHOTO: STAR**  
Abdul Kuddus Bayati performs at a cultural function at the South Plaza of Sangsad Bhaban in the city yesterday on the occasion of the upcoming 14th Asian Games to be held in Busan, South Korea. The Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) organised the event.

## 'Take steps to conserve tortoise, sea mammals'

**BSS, Dhaka**  
State Minister for Environment and Forest Jafrul Islam Chowdhury has called upon member countries of the Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) to take measures to conserve tortoise and sea mammals, specially the dolphins in the Bay of Bengal.

The state minister made the call during his speech at the seventh meeting of the CMS in Bonn on Saturday, according to information received in Dhaka.

Chowdhury said the existence

of the tortoise and mammals in the Bay of Bengal, like those in the India Ocean and of South Asia, was under threat to a large extent.

The population of those species is decreasing day by day due to different adverse conditions, he added.

Speaking about migratory birds, he said the existence of the water birds in Bangladesh are under threat due to the poisonous effects of different pesticides used in agricultural fields.

He also emphasised on international initiative in this regard.

## Engr Mosharraf gets bail

**BSS, Dhaka**  
The High Court yesterday granted anticipatory bail to former minister and Awami League leader Engineer Mosharraf Hossain, former RAJUK chairman Azizul Haque and former secretary of RAJUK Khan Belayet Hossain for six months in a graft case regarding allotment of NAM flats.

The court issued rule asking the government to show cause within four weeks why the petitioners should not be enlarged on permanent bail.

A Division Bench comprising Justice Amirul Kabir Chowdhury

and Justice Faroque Ahmed passed the order upon hearing three separate petitions.

The Bureau of Anti-corruption filed a graft case with Mofijheel thana on September 16 against former works minister Engineer Mosharraf and others for their alleged corruption in allotment of NAM flats.

Advocates Abdul Matin Khasru and Saifuddin Ahmed moved the petitions on behalf of the petitioners while Deputy Attorney General Golam Mohammad Chowdhury stood for the state.

## 'Take stern action against smugglers'

**UNB, Rajshahi**  
Post and Telecommunications Minister Barrister Aminul Haq has directed the officials of law-enforcing agencies to take stern action against the criminals and smugglers.

He also sought cooperation from the people of all walks of life in this regard. He was addressing a meeting of the district law and order committee held here on Saturday.

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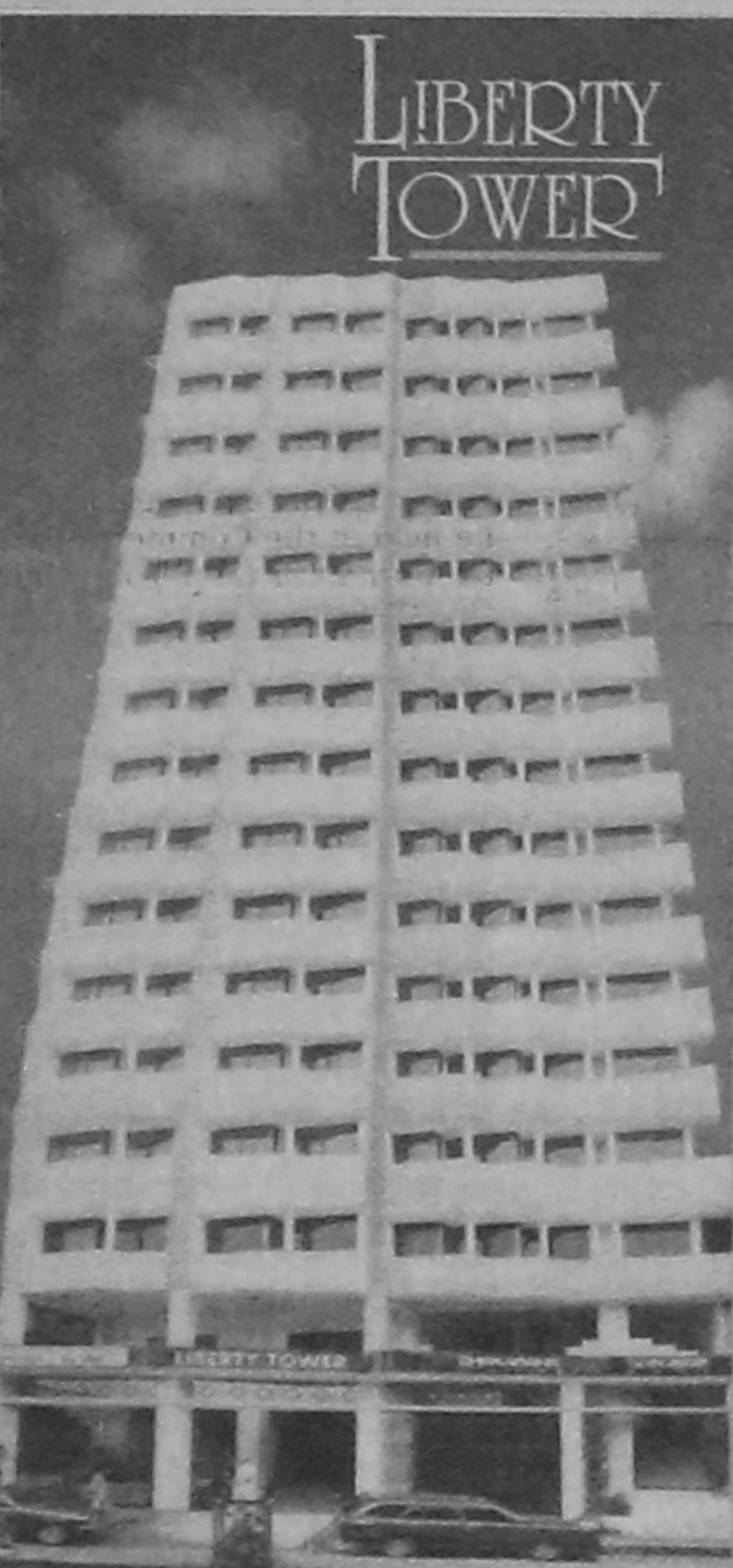
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