

## Ahmadiyya books banned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has banned all publications of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat Bangladesh a day before the end of an ultimatum by religious bigots to declare the sect non-Muslims.

"The ban was imposed in view of objectionable materials in such (Ahmadiyya) publications which hurt or might hurt the sentiments of the majority Muslim population of Bangladesh," said a press release of the home ministry yesterday.

The bigots represented mainly by Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ), a partner of the ruling coalition, have long been campaigning for the move. The Hizfate Khatme Nabuwat Andolon

(HKNA), represented by IOJ leaders, spearheads the anti-Ahmadiyya agitation.

The move is believed to be the first step towards declaring about one lakh Ahmadiyyas in the country non-Muslims, said a source present at a high-level meeting at the religious affairs ministry yesterday.

The government has not yet taken any decision on the issue of declaring the Ahmadiyyas non-Muslims, he added.

"We discussed the demand but need to explore all aspects to reach a decision in this regard," a top government official who was present at the meeting said on condition of anonymity.

In an immediate reaction, Abdul

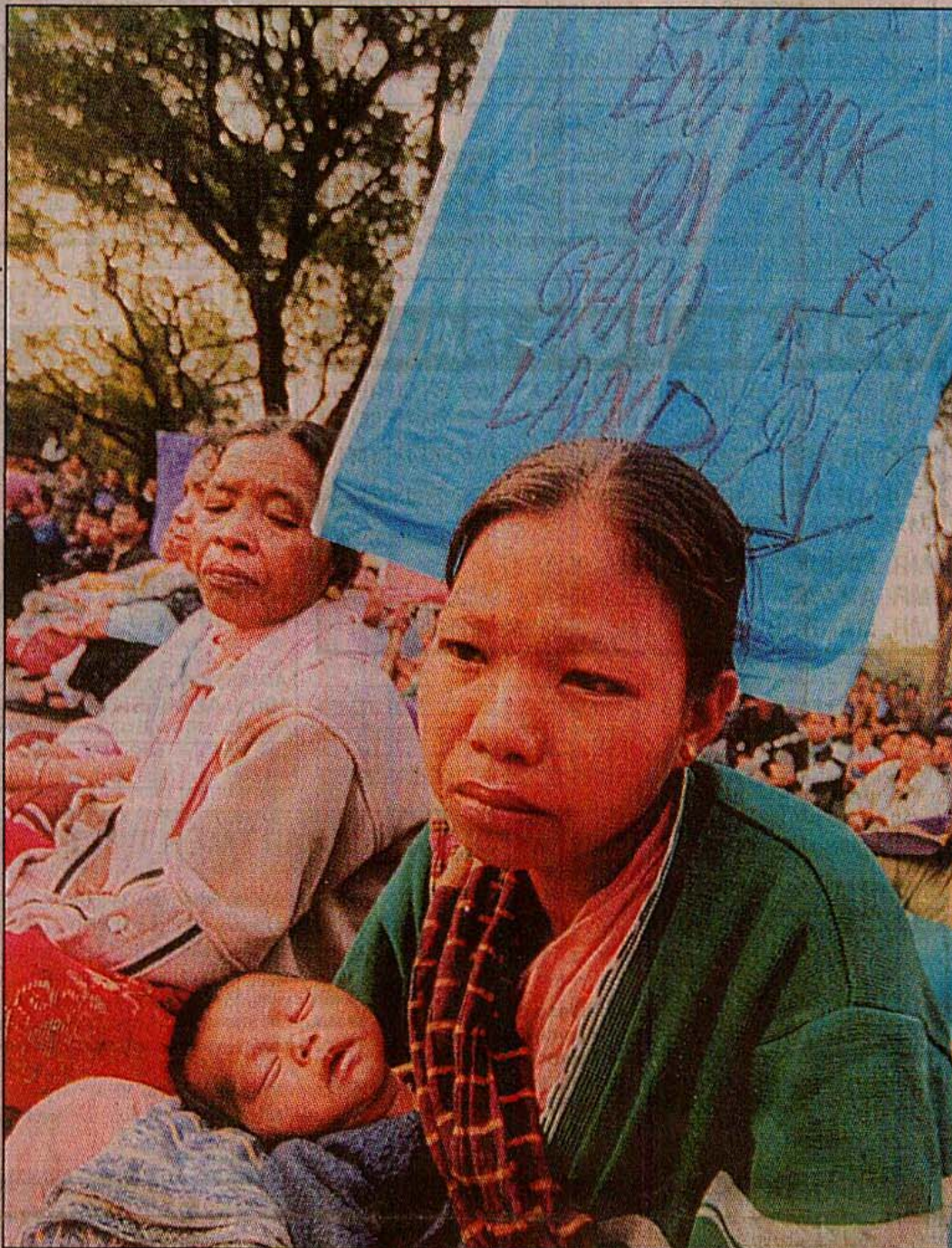
Awal, Missionary of Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat Bangladesh, said: "We are shocked. The government has bowed down to religious terrorists."

"The people's right to the freedom of expression as enshrined in the constitution has been violated by taking such a decision," he said.

State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharef Hossain Shajahan chaired the meeting held at the ministry. State Minister for Home Lutfuzzaman Babar, former chief election commissioner Justice Abdur Rouf and Khatib of Baitul Mokarram National Mosque Obaidul Haque also participated.

The HKNA Amir, Mahmudul

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Sita Nakrek, widow of Piren Slan, attends a rally at the Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka yesterday to protest the killing of her husband in fire from forest guards and police and the Modhupur forest eco-park plan that the Garos fear will threaten their traditional lifestyle.

## 10 abducted in Rangamati

PCJSS blamed, kidnapped hills student found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

At least 10 villagers were abducted in an incident blamed on a pro-CHT peace accord indigenous outfit and the body of a student killed in captivity was recovered in Rangamati yesterday in the latest in a string of kidnaps in the restive highlands.

Witnesses said up to 25 armed cadres of the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) launched attacks on their rival members of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) in Shapmara village in Naniarchar

upazila and abducted the villagers apparently for sheltering UPDF men.

Police also blamed the attack and abduction on the PCJSS that got bogged down in clashes with the UPDF after the 1997 peace deal that ended two decades of bush war in the CHT (Chittagong Hill Tracts).

The PCJSS men drove their rivals out of the village in the fierce firefight that came at about 9:00am before the abduction prompting the army to launch sweeps in the district in search of the abductors.

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## Accused threatens cop with death

UNB, Dhaka

A police inspector and witness in a murder case has been threatened with death by the accused on the court premises Wednesday.

"Zahid Hasan Aslam, accused in a number of murder cases, threatened me with life," said Inspector Nabi Hossain.

Investigation officer (IO) of Russell murder case in Rugganj about two years ago, Nabi, now posted in Kishoreganj, Wednesday appeared before the Speedy Trial Tribunal in the city as prosecution witness.

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## Fear stalks Garos in forest homes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Insecurity stalks the indigenous people in their Modhupur forest homes after ruling BNP activists allegedly threatened them in the wake of violence that locals say is aimed at upsetting their movement against an eco-park.

Locals claimed Bangalee Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) activists, armed with firearms and machetes, barged into the forest village of Jalchatra-Pachish Mile on Wednesday night and threatened the indigenous people not to raise

their voice again the park.

Many Garos shut down their shops and left their homes to seek security elsewhere, locals said.

The government is planning to develop an eco-park under about Tk 9 crore Madhupur National Park Development Project in the 3,000-acre heart of the sal forest, sparking protest from indigenous people who live in the forest for ages and fear the project will destroy their peace.

The threat came after a tempo of BNP activists ran into a procession of Garo people who were returning

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## Hasina blasts PM for 'unabated corruption'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday took a swipe at the prime minister, her family members and cabinet colleagues for 'unabated corruption', accusing them (ruling alliance loyalists) of getting busy making quick bucks instead of governing the country.

"We have documents on their corruption, and there will be always another turn for us to pay back," Hasina said when lawyers of Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association and Dhaka District Bar

Association met her at her party's Dhanmondi office in the afternoon.

"The prime minister's two sons are so desperate that they even make money out of billboard business," alleged the AL president, adding, "Her family members have got hold of the work order to purchase spare parts for MiG-29s."

She however brushed aside the allegations of corruption against her government in the controversial purchase of MiG-29s for the air force and a Frigate for navy. "I have the confidence to say that I did not make any illegal money during the Awami

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## UNDP envoy optimistic about ending CHT impasse

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

The leader of the UN mission visiting the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) hopes to end the deadlock and resume development activities here soon.

"There still exist some problems and disagreement but I am sure that we could overcome it," Sarah L. Timpson said talking to The Daily Star at Rangamati Hill District Council (RHDC) at 5:00pm yesterday.

The three-member high profile UNDP team led by Sarah arrived here at around 10:00 am and held three-hour talks with Jyotindra Bodipriya Larma alias Santu Larma

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## CNG 3-WHEELER SCAM CHARGE Callers complain of more sleaze

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Many called the office of a parliamentary standing committee chairman yesterday, alleging sleaze in the sale of CNG autorickshaws, a day after the communications ministry was blamed for monopoly of Uttara Motors in the import of such vehicles.

Syed Monjur Hossain, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on the communications ministry, and its members asked the callers to lodge complaints with the sub-committee formed Wednesday to probe the allegations of corruption.

The Jatiya Sangsad body that fired a broadside at Communications

Minister Nazmul Huda for what it said was impropriety in the distribution of CNG (compressed natural gas) autorickshaws will review the complaints at its next meeting in February.

"No anomaly crept into the import of CNG autorickshaws," Huda said in defence, adding he underwent eye treatment in London in the days when the import plan was in the making.

Committee members told a meeting at the Sangsad Bhaban that Uttara Motors spiked the prices of a CNG autorickshaw up to Tk 3.67 lakh from the actual price at Tk 1.67 lakh.

"The callers raised more

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