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## Tengratila fire now 'out of Niko hand'

Human chain, rally demand its ouster

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

The raging fire at Tengratila gas field continued for the fifth day yesterday with the roaring flames leaping more than 350 feet and the pressure of burning gas leaking through various points further intensified.

Part of the rig base at the gas field fell into the burning relief well with a big bang at about 2:30pm yesterday, Niko sources said.

Seeking anonymity, they admitted they have 'nothing to do' to tame

the blaze. "We simply have to wait for it," one source said.

**JS body to assess eco damage**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The parliamentary standing committee on forest and environment ministry yesterday formed a sub-committee to assess the

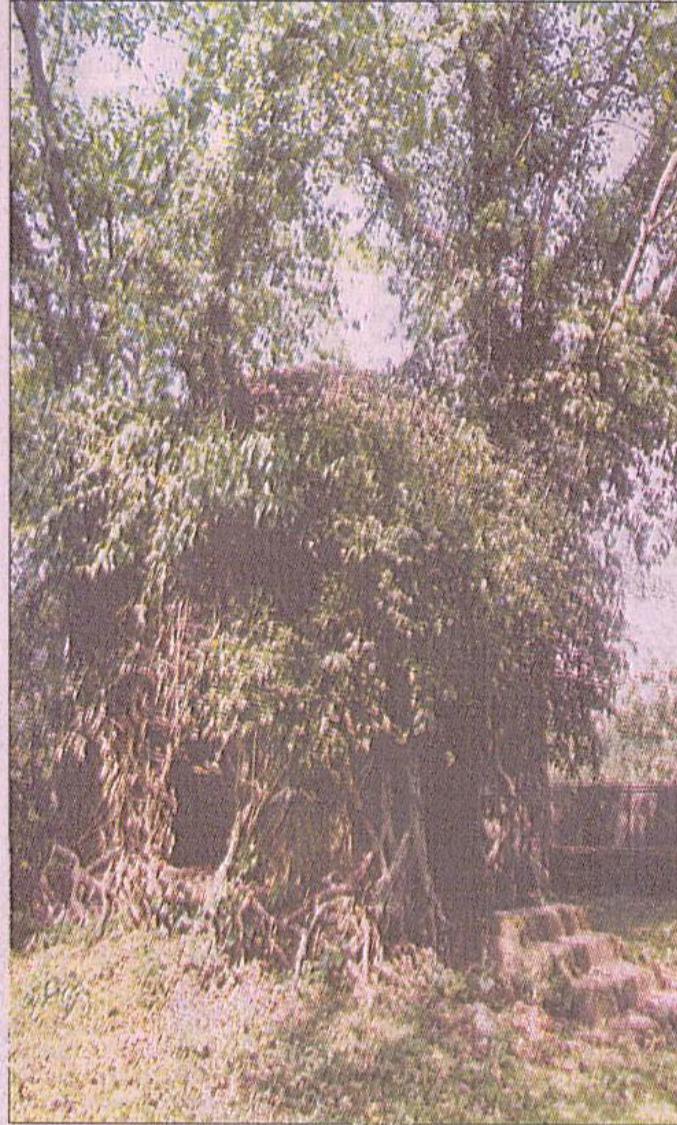
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Meanwhile, local environmentalist forums and other organisations formed a 'human chain' and held a rally near the gas field area yesterday, demanding immediate scrapping of the contract with Niko and compensation for the damage of gas and environment.

The rally held the Canadian company responsible for repeated destruction of gas resources.

The government-formed probe committee headed by Dr

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King Rajendra's temple in Jaintapur, Sylhet, is facing ruination as the 200-year-old archaeological site remains uncared-for.

## US official stresses protection for Ahmadiyyas

Says they are increasingly being 'victims of persecution'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia John A Gastricht yesterday stressed the need for ensuring protection for the Ahmadiyyas as they are increasingly being 'victims of persecution' across the country.

The deputy assistant secretary also said he believes the Bangladesh government is capable of taking tougher measures in this regard.

"We are deeply concerned about 19 incidents of attacks on the Ahmadiyyas in last 21 months and

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we know that the government has the ability to protect them (Ahmadiyyas)," Gastricht said, after a meeting with Ahmadiyya leaders in Dhaka.

On visiting Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat Bangladesh's (AMJB) headquarters, he said he is anxious for the Ahmadiyyas after learning from the newspapers about the 'terrible atrocities on them'.

"We feel the government needs to uphold the rights of all people including the Ahmadiyyas, and the United States will keep a close watch

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Ershad dismissed the allegation made in the general diary (GD) as "absurd" and said he did not go to

King Rajendra's temple in Jaintapur, Sylhet, is facing ruination as the 200-year-old archaeological site remains uncared-for.

## GD against Ershad over life threat to Bidisha's sister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Trisha Rahman, younger sister of Bidisha, yesterday filed a complaint with Uttara Police Station against Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad where she said Ershad threatened to kill her and her family if Bidisha stays at her house.

Ershad dismissed the allegation made in the general diary (GD) as "absurd" and said he did not go to

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## Jute ministry wants to borrow from banks to salvage closing mills

Workers call general strike on July 16

REAZ AHMAD

As the government has stopped financing the jute sector, the jute ministry in its last ditch effort to keep the state-owned mills running has sought the finance ministry's approval to borrow from banks.

Following the jute ministry's repeated pleas for allocating Tk 200 crore to buy raw jute to keep the mills running, the finance ministry said in May that it was not possible for the government to finance the jute sector because of the govern-

ment's commitment to multilateral donors not to finance the loss-making state-owned enterprises (SoEs).

The finance's refusal to fund BAJMC came at a time when 15 out of a total 22 state-run jute mills have already been shut down due to scarcity of raw jute and mill workers have been staging street agitation demanding their arrears for the last eight months.

Officials both at the finance and jute ministries now fear that if the

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## NBR may revise SIM, corporate taxes, money whitening step

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The NBR will submit its revised plan to the finance minister by today or tomorrow, the sources said. The budget is scheduled to be passed in parliament tomorrow.

Amid widespread criticism of the provision for whitening black money, the NBR is now considering imposing 10 to 15 percent tax on it.

Its earlier proposal offered black money holders the option to legalise their undeclared income by paying 7.5 percent tax.

The criticisms came specially when the finance minister, before

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OIC wants permanent UNSC seat  
FM's meet opens in Sanaa

AFP, Sanaa

Foreign ministers of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference opened a meeting here yesterday with a call for a Muslim permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

OIC secretary general Elmeleddin Ihsanoglu urged a greater role for Muslim countries in world affairs and demanded a permanent representation for the Islamic world on the UN Security Council.

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## Bangla Bhai men attack journalist

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Bangla Bhai's Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) adherents attacked a journalist at Bhangani in Bagmara upazila yesterday evening for helping reporters of different national dailies in reporting against them.

Led by Moshiur Rahman Peter, a drug-trader and close associate of JMJB leaders, a group of five attackers armed with scythe and bamboo sticks swooped on Shafiqul Islam, Bagmara correspondent of the daily

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## SC Bar adopts resolution on CJ

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) yesterday accused the chief justice (CJ) of misusing his constitutional power by constituting and reconstituting High Court benches and moved to file a lawsuit for an end to the practice.

It said Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassir Husain should apply his constitutional power so that the independence of the High Court judges is never called into question.

The Bar Association at an emergency general meeting presided over by its President Advocate Mahbubey Alam adopted a resolution to take legal steps to resolve the issue.

The meeting held at the Supreme Court Bar Building observed that in many instances the chief justice was seen changing the jurisdiction of certain High Court benches all on a sudden immediately after they issued rules or orders in some sensitive cases.

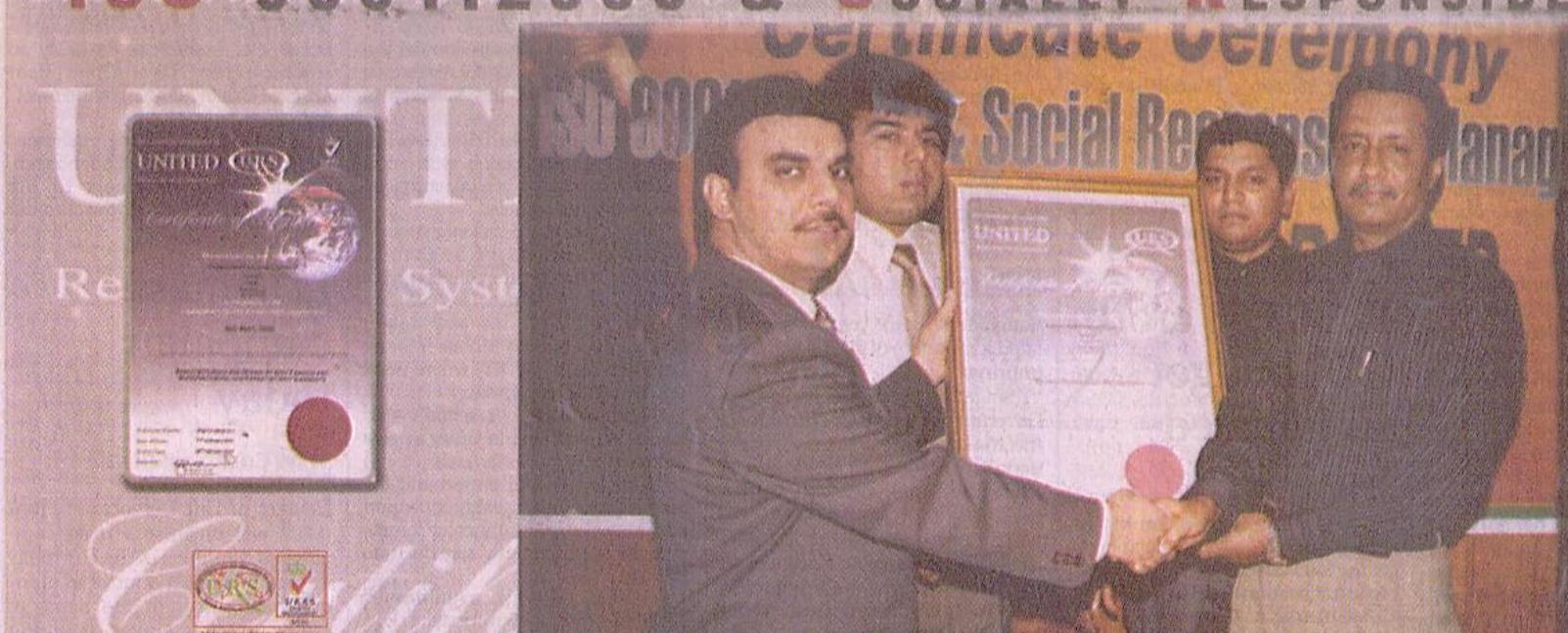
The chief justice should execute

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