

TASK FORCE REPORT SUBMITTED TO GOVT

'Save Buriganga for sake of next generation'

BSS, Dhaka
The task force on saving the Buriganga river submitted its report to the government yesterday.

Task force Chairman Enam Ahmed Choudhury handed the report to Agriculture and Water Resources Adviser CS Karim at his secretariat office.

The government formed the task force on June 8 this year. CS Karim said the task force recommendations would contribute a lot to saving the river to mark the occasion of 400 years of Dhaka as the capital. The work will begin soon to implement the recommendations.

The Buriganga must be saved for the sake of the next generation through implementation of the task force report, he said.

Karim said it poses a challenge to free the city's river from encroachers, end dumping of toxic effluents and increase its flow.

He said task force recommendations suggested that the Buriganga has not yet died. The plan of action has already been made and it only awaits implementation.

The chairman of the 11-

member task force said so much efforts have never been made to save the Buriganga.

"Dhaka is completing its four hundred years. We must save the Buriganga at this time by managing its banks, freeing them from encroachments and keeping it free from pollution, maintaining its normal flow and taking long-term measures to develop its navigation," Choudhury said.

The recommendations include review of lease on the river banks and terminating new lease, preventing dumping of industrial and other wastes in the river to keep it pollution free and maintaining its flow normal by excavation of canals.

Choudhury said already 2500 illegal establishments have been removed, and the Sutikhola and Shuvaddya canals have been reopened. Opening more canals has also been suggested.

The task force has had nine meetings and visited the river banks to prepare their report, he told a reporter.

He said a social movement should be built to create public awareness with the help of the local people and police help should be sought to manage the river banks.

He said recommendations have

been made to bring new water to the river. The Wasa should work with Rajuk so that it does not dump its wastes in the river.

The task force also suggested that the lands should be surveyed immediately to record them as the government property.

Notice should be issued to declare the boundary of Dhaka river port from Ashulia to Buriganga entry point at Dharmaganj, re-fixation of the limit of the proposed Mirkadim-Munshiganj river port on one side at Buriganga point to Gopchar of Shitalakha and on other side from Betka to Munshiganj launch ghata.

The recommendations include limiting Tongi river port from Demra to Ashulia, expansion of BIWTA Tongi port, setting up of river police outposts at different places around Dhaka city including Buriganga and along the river ways under the police stations of the city.

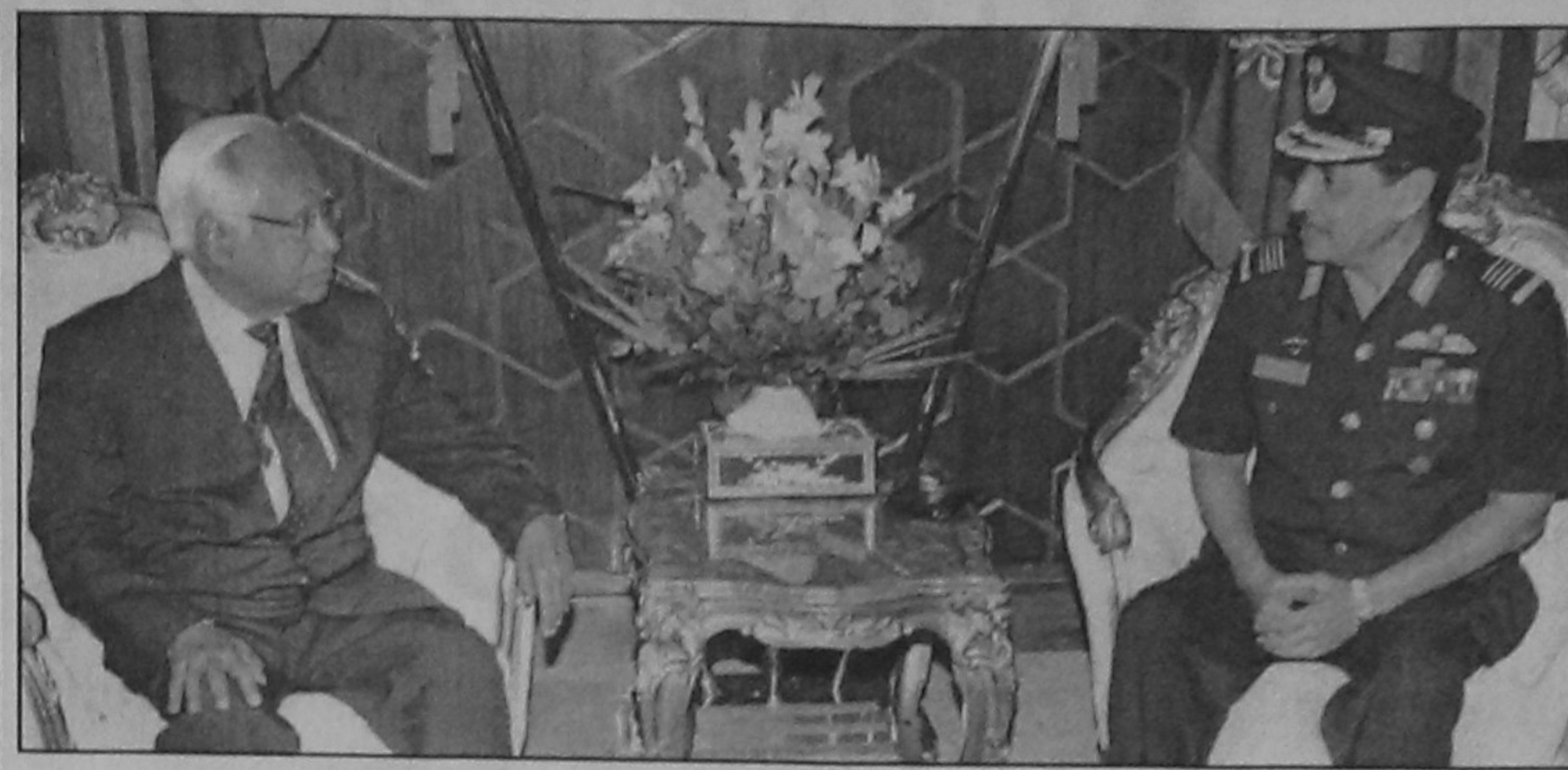
Besides, the recommendations have been made to widen the Water Development Board embankment road by at least 80 feet, expansion of the BIWTA project to improve the river ways around Dhaka from Ashulia to Tongi, removal of hats and bazars set up by local government bodies on the river banks,

removal of religious and educational institutions through discussions with the local parliament members within six months.

Other recommendations include short and medium term projects to implement them within three years so that Dhaka City Corporation and Wasa take measures not to dump wastes or sewers in the river.

The task force recommended removal of tanneries from Hazaribagh elsewhere and taking up projects for implementation within three years so that other industries do not dump their wastes in the river, restriction on dumping wastes in the Buriganga and making it compulsory to take clearance from BIWTA to set up any establishment within 50 metres of the river banks, banning brickfields within 200 metres and initiating 'save the river' campaign in the media.

Apart from these, some long-term measures have also been suggested to maintain river flow and keep navigation normal like dredging of the Dhaleswari, Karnatali rivers and river ways to Buriganga round the year and keep the river flow on with water flowing from the Jamuna and restoration of the navigation.



Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal Shah M Ziaur Rahman calls on President Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday.

'Extortionists killed Murad'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bus owners of Ilish Paribahan and police said the extortionists shot dead a college student and injured two others at the transport company office in the city on Tuesday failing to extort Tk 10 lakh from the company.

Sutrapur police could not yet arrest any extortionists though they (extortionists) following the killing informed the bus owners that they committed the killing as their demand was not fulfilled, bus owners of the area said.

Murad was a part-time employee of the company. His bullet-hit uncle Titu was undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, while another injured Mahub was referred to Pangu (Orthopaedic) Hospital in the city.

Quoting the extortionists, the bus owners said after the incident, the criminals increased their toll demand to 20 lakh from 10 lakh, adding that after committing the killing they had to tackle the situation.

The bus owners alleged that they have been receiving constant threats from the extortionists for the last two months.

They also informed Rab and police of the incidents at different meetings between law enforcement

agencies and the transport leaders at different times, but the law enforcers did not take any steps so far to stop the harassment, they added.

Chairman of Ilish Paribahan Md Mohiuddin Sikdar said 48 buses of 34 owners of the company ply on Dhaka-Mawa and Dhaka-Barisal routes.

He said the extortionist, who identified himself as Rojon, had been demanding Tk 10 lakh as toll for the last two months threatening that his men would close the transport business if the demand is not fulfilled.

Quoting the extortionist, Sikdar also said the criminal over a cellphone said that his men had to kill an innocent student only to send the message that if their demand is not met, they will later kill the bus owners.

The extortionists exploded cocktails for two times at their Jatrabari bus counter during the last Ramadan for the same demand, he added.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) Tofazzal Hossain of Sutrapur Police Station said police were not informed of the demand for extortion earlier.

Meanwhile, the leaders of Bangladesh Road Transport Workers' Union condemned the killing and demanded immediate arrest of the killers, says a press release.

Female doc held on charge of torturing domestic help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mirpur police yesterday evening arrested a doctor on charge of torturing her domestic help in the city's Kalyanpur area.

The arrestee was identified as intern doctor Farzana Zafar, wife of engineer Abdullah Al Makir.

Domestic help Afroza's uncle Md Saidur of Kalyanpur Pura Basti area, filed a case against the female doctor with Mirpur Police Station under the women and children repression prevention act.

Mirpur police arrested the doctor, who is doing internship at Sikdar Medical College and Hospital, from her residence and rescued Afroza, 12.

Police said Farzana used to torture the maid with hot iron sticks, leaving several injury marks on her body over trifle matters.

Afroza had been working in the house for over five months, police added.

Air chief calls on president

UNB, Dhaka

Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal Shah M Ziaur Rahman called on President Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday.

During the meeting, the air chief apprised the president of his experience gathered from his recent visit to the Czech Republic.

Rahman also informed the president about different ongoing development activities of Bangladesh Air force. Iajuddin, also the Supreme Commander of Arms Forces, gave a patient hearing to the air chief and assured him of giving all out cooperation in development of Bangladesh Air Force.

Drug peddler killed in shootout with Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged drug peddler was killed in a shootout between his accomplices and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) at South Keraniganj yesterday. The deceased was identified as Shafiq Ahmed alias Yunus, 28, of Kholamura village.

Rab-10 sources said sensing the presence of law enforcing agencies the criminals took refuge at nearby Alukanda when a Rab team took position on Dhaka-Mawa highway in the Tegoria area.

The shootout began when the accomplices of Shafiq opened fire at the law enforcement agencies and at one stage his cohorts fled the spot, leaving him dead on the spot, Rab said.

Yunus was an accused in 11 cases with different police stations, the source said.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Firoza Khatun, wife of Engineer late Mohibul Majid and daughter of poet Golam Mostafa, passed away due to old-age complications at her residence at Moghbazar in the city yesterday at the age of 84.

She left behind her two daughters, two brothers and one sister to mourn her death.

She will be buried after returning home of her younger daughter Fahmida Majid Manzu from London.

Azizul Alam

RU CORRESPONDENT

Azizul Alam, a freedom fighter and former ward commissioner of Rajshahi City Corporation, passed away after a long illness at his residence in the city on Tuesday night at the age of 59.

He left behind his wife, son and one daughter and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

He was buried with state honour at Kadirganj graveyard in the city yesterday.

Fazle Lohani's anniversary of death today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 23rd death anniversary of Fazle Lohani, a popular television personality, says a press release.

On the occasion, Fazle Lohani Smriti Sangsad will organise a doa mahfil (2, Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Sharani Modern Auditorium) in the city. A discussion will also be at the same venue on November 5.

Iqbal Ansari Khan

METRO DESK

Today is the ninth death anniversary of Iqbal Ansari Khan, a Language Movement veteran, a freedom fighter and social worker, says a press release.

He authored three books.

Azizur Rahman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the eighth death anniversary of Azizur Rahman, headmaster of Gaibandha Islamia High School, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil and Qurankhwani will be held. A hand writing competition for the children will also be held in Gaibandha town.

Highest Korean military award for Gen Moeen

UNB, Dhaka

Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed received 'Order of National Security Merit' award from South Korea for his outstanding contribution to promoting defence cooperation and trust between the armed forces of the two friendly countries.

General Lim Choung Bin, Chief of the Korean Army, presented the award on behalf of the President of Korea during General Moeen's visit to the Korean Army headquarters yesterday, said a message received here last night.

It was learnt that this prestigious award, known as 'Tong-il Medal' in the Korean language, is the highest military award of the Korean Government.

The award has so far been given to only a handful of defence personnel from foreign countries, and this year General Moeen is the only recipient of the laurels.

According to the Korean Army, the award came also as recognition to General Moeen's contribution in cooperating with the South Korean Army's participation in the UN peacekeeping operations.

General Moeen thanked the Korean government for showing him this "singular honour" and expressed the hope that the existing cooperation between the armed forces of the two friendly countries "will further expand and deepen in the coming days".

Contribution of Moniruzzaman recalled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University teachers yesterday said Prof Mohammad Moniruzzaman, noted litterateur, poet and lyricist and former teacher of Bangla department, was a jewel of the Bangla literature.

They said this at a memorial meeting on the life and works of Prof Moniruzzaman at the seminar room of Centre for Advanced Research in Humanities on the campus.

Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury said his literary works were non-communal and inspirational as he was indirectly involved in the liberation war and wrote a number of patriotic songs during that time.

Moniruzzaman was a person who can be a role model for the university students and teachers, he added.

Abul Qasem Fazlul Haq, chairman of Bangla department, said most of the people know Moniruzzaman as a lyricist as he was famous for writing songs of Bangla cinema in 60s.

But a few know that he liked to guide the PhD students as almost 50 students of the university did their PhDs under his guidance.

Prof Rafiqul Islam said when Pakistan government banned Rabindra Sangeet in 1967, university teachers started a movement against the decision. Moniruzzaman played a prominent part in the movement that continued until 1971.

Prof Anisuzzaman, Sadrul Amin, Ahmed Kabir also took part in the meeting.

Call to establish physiotherapy college

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hundreds of physiotherapy students formed a human chain yesterday demanding immediate establishment of a physiotherapy college and resumption of classes at the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedics Rehabilitation (Nitor).

Under the banner of Bangladesh Physiotherapy Students' Union, the students of Nitor, Bangladesh Medical College, Centre for Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP) and State University of Bangladesh also demanded publication of the result that has been postponed for a long time and withdrawal of the false cases against the students.

The students at the human chain at the National Press Club in the city declared to go for stern action if their demands go unmet within two weeks.

Following a clash among the physiotherapy and orthopaedic students, the Nitor authorities suspended the classes for an indefinite period on September 4.

All the classes, examinations and clinical practices have been halted since then making the future of around 600 students uncertain, they added.

City cops fail to arrest rapist of minor girl

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police could not arrest the rapist three days after he had raped a six-year-old minor girl leaving her seriously injured in the city.

The victim, a student of class one at Aparajeyo Bangladesh School, resides at the slum of Sattar Mollah at Section-12 in Mirpur.

Victim's mother, a garment worker, said one Halim alias Halan violated the girl after finding her alone in the house on Monday.

Locals detained Halim who was also identified by the victim as rapist.

But an influential quarter got

Halim released and compelled her mother not to file any case, MA Hannan, a teacher of the victim, told this correspondent.

He alleged that police did not arrest the rapist although they told them immediately.

Pallabi police said they were not informed of the incident.

According to hospital sources, the victim was brought to One-stop Crisis Centre at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital yesterday with bleeding from her injured organ.

A doctor at the centre told The Daily Star that she was a rape victim.

Procession today for reinstatement of Baul sculptures

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent citizens, teachers, students, cultural activists and artists will bring out a procession today demanding reinstatement of Baul sculptures at the airport intersection in the city.

The procession, which will be brought out from the Aparajeyo Bangla at Dhaka University (DU) under the banner of 'Bhashkarja Rakkhya Andolon' (BRA), a movement to protect sculptures, at 11.00am, will march towards the airport.

BRA has also demanded trial of war criminals, modernisation of madrasa curriculum and ban on religion-based politics.

Meanwhile, a group of artists under the banner of 'Swachetan Shilpi Samaj' (SSS) brought out a procession on DU campus yesterday demanding free environment for art and culture.

They rendered patriotic and baul songs at the procession protesting the removal of the sculptures.

They also alleged that the installation of a low-quality statue of Lalon and its subsequent removal under pressure from Islamist group is a plotted drama.

The SSS will bring out a candle light procession on DU campus today at 6.00pm demanding the reinstatement of a high-quality statue at the airport intersection which it has named as Lalon square.

DHAKA TODAY

Workshop
Local Government Division organises a national dissemination workshop on 'Horizontal learning for strengthening capacities of local government institution on improving water supply and sanitation services in Bangladesh'. Venue: Sheraton Hotel. Time: 8:00am.

Seminar
The inaugural ceremony of a four-day seminar on 'Management of clubfoot-ponseti method' will be held. Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP) organises the seminar. Venue: CRP, Mirpur. Time: 8:00am.

Discussion
Officers' Club Dhaka organises a discussion on the role of elderly people in flourishing tourism industry. Venue: Club auditorium. Time: 7:00pm.

IT fair
The inaugural ceremony of the nine-day 'ECS City IT Fair 2008' will be held. Venue: Plan Centre. Time: 11:00am.

Trade fair
The inaugural ceremony of the trade fair organised by Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) will be held. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 9:00am.

Seminar
Bangladesh Computer Council organises a seminar on development of national e-government strategy for Bangladesh. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 10:00am.

Roundtable
Save the Children-UK in partnership with Eminence will organise a roundtable on 'Secure nutritious diet: Save children's lives'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 11:30am.

WEATHER TODAY

UNB, Dhaka

Dry weather with temporary partly cloudy sky is likely to prevail over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country. Met Office said in a forecast.

Highest temperature 31.6 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sitakundu and lowest 18.0 degrees Celsius at Srirongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:21 pm today and rises at 6:04 am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	29.0	18.9	72	66
Chittagong	28.0	20.6	72	66
Rajshahi	29.0	18.5	93	81
Khulna	29.0	20.0	86	79
Barisal	30.0	19.2	82	91
Sylhet	30.5	20.2	85	82
Cox's Bazar	31.0	22.7	79	76

Probes politicised

FROM PAGE 1

Eleven days after the grisly grenade attack aimed to assassinate the then opposition leader Sheikh Hasina, the then premier and BNP chief Khaleda Zia pinned the blame on AL leaders.

Fifty months into the attack, a Dhaka court yesterday framed charges against 22 people, including a deputy minister of Khaleda's government and a former BNP lawmaker.

Rest of the accused are leaders and operatives of outlawed Islamist militant outfit Harkatul Jihad al Islami (Huji).

Interestingly, the former PM, three weeks into the attack, said during a BNP parliamentary party meeting that no Islamist extremist groups existed in the country.

"We have to prove that we don't patronise Islamist extremists and that no such groups exist in the country," said Khaleda accusing the then main opposition AL of conspiring to tarnish the country's image.

Ten days before that speech, Khaleda said the attack was part of conspiracy to tarnish her administration's image and divert public attention from her government's success.

"As investigations are on into the incident, I won't name anyone. But I do know for sure that there was a plot, which is still being nursed," Khaleda told her party meeting on September 2, 2004.

Besides, less than a month into the attack, the BNP legislators in parliament in presence of Khaleda pinned blame AL for perpetrating the grisly attack on its own rally endangering the life of its own chief.

Twenty-four people were killed and over 300 maimed in that August 21 attack.

Meanwhile, the one-member judicial probe committee of Justice Joyrul Abedin, which the then government formed a few days into the attack, claimed in its 162-page report to have identified perpetrators of the massacre.

The report has never been made public.

"The incident is a naked attack on independence and sovereignty of the country," the commission chief told reporters after submitting the report in October 2004.

His probe report pinned the blame on a "foreign enemy", but the investigators have so far failed to substantiate it.

The alliance government's stance subsequently influenced the then investigators to weave a story involving Mokhlesur Rahman, a ward-level AL leader and former ward commissioner of Moghbazar in the capital.

The investigators also attempted to feed the public another wovon story through an ostensible confessional statement made by a petty criminal Joj Miah, who named Mokhlesur as one of the planners.

Jo's very weakly woven statement drew media criticism, finally making it appear as blatantly meretricious. He himself turned out to be a creation of the investigators' well practiced imagination when his sister revealed to the media that Criminal Investigation Department (CID) had been paying his family Tk 2,500 a month for upkeep since the arrest.

Based on statements by Joj and

two others, all of who had made almost identical confessions, the CID investigators even attempted to submit a charge sheet. But the government held it back following media flak terming Joj's story very sketchy.

Apart from Mokhlesur and Joj, 18 others were arrested and tortured severely. Finally, a Dhaka court ordered their release as the charges brought against them by the erstwhile investigators were baseless.

Besides local investigation, the government allowed Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Interpol to probe the attack, but people are still in dark about their findings.

The Interpol report with details of the attack was attached to the charge sheets and was also submitted to the government. CID officials say. They say the FBI, which had taken some pieces of evidence for test and returned those later, did not submit any report.

Despite the charge sheets against 22, many serving and retired investigators, who were involved at different stages of the investigations, told this correspondent that the masterminds behind the attack remain undetected even after charges have been pinned in two cases filed in this connection.

"The gravity of the attack indicates it was not possible to be carried out without backing of any influential group or some most powerful people. But we don't see any such findings," an investigator, who was assigned soon after the attack and discharged his duty for quite a long time, told The Daily Star in August.

Destruction of 'toxic' milk

FROM PAGE 1

The Dhaka University chemistry department found melamine in them.

The brands are Diploma, Red Cow, Dano, Anlene, Nido fortified instant, Yashili 1, Yashili 2 and Sweet Baby 2.

Manzil Murshid, counsel of petitioner Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh, yesterday told The Daily Star that the HC ruling does not order destruction of the brands. They can be seized, but to destroy them the government has to issue notices.

A mobile court led by Bamna Upazila Nirbahi Officer Azad Sallal burnt 12-15kg powdered milk in Hospital Road and Sadar Road areas Tuesday night.

A correspondent in Chapainawabganj reported that a mobile court burnt 171 tins and packets of banned brands of powder milk on Tuesday.

While talking to The Daily Star, Health and Food Adviser AMM Shawkat Ali avoided a direct answer when he was asked why mobile courts destroyed some of the banned powdered milk brands, and said businesses are supposed to follow the HC orders, otherwise face the consequences.

Asked if the HC ordered destruction of the banned milk, he

said, "We have not yet seen the court order."

In reply to another question, Shawkat Ali said, "Why should the government order traders to withdraw the banned products from the market? The businesses should withdraw them on their own."

New Zealand Dairy Products Bangladesh Ltd Managing Director SA Mallick criticised sealing off of warehouses and burning products at some places.

"I think the court order was not interpreted correctly everywhere," he said. He claimed that traders have acted in accordance with the court order. "But, it may not be implemented fully," he added.

"We contacted the IGP and the home secretary and they assured that they would take measures so that sealing warehouses or burning products do not take place anymore," Mallick said.

Our correspondent in Chittagong reported that mobile courts yesterday seized huge amount of banned milk powder from department stores and realised Tk 26,000 in fines for preserving expired food items.

A mobile court led by Magistrate Zakir Hossain seized 43 tins of Dano and Nido at city's Kazir Dewry Market and realised Tk