

Devotees offer Juma prayers at the Baitul Mukarram Mosque in the city yesterday, the first Friday of Ramadan.

PHOTO: STAR

Extortionist stabs three transport workers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An extortionist stabbed three employees of a private bus service for air passengers in Zia International Airport area on Thursday.

The injured -- Giasuddin, 35, Samad, 35, and Shahjahan, 30, -- were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Sources said Alauddin, son of Babul, a staff of the bus service 'Nep-tune', demanded Tk 1,100 from 11 staffs, including his father recently.

Accompanied by seven to eight cadres, he met bus supervisor Giasuddin at around 10.00am and asked him to pay the money, leading to an altercation.

At one point of altercation, Alauddin pulled out a knife from his pocket and stabbed in the right ear of Giasuddin.

As two other workers- Samad and Shahjahan- rushed to help Giasuddin, Alauddin also stabbed them in their hands.

Security personnel and policemen, stationed on the airport premises, caught Alauddin with knife and handed him over to Airport police station.

'Unite to establish truly democratic country'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of different political parties yesterday urged all progressive political forces to be united in order to establish a truly secular and democratic country.

They made the call at a discussion organised by the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Inu) in the city to mark the 31st founding anniversary of the party.

Speaking on the occasion, JSD President Hasanul Hoque Inu said people are passing their days in a suffocating situation as prices of the essentials have gone beyond their purchasing power.

Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil said all pro-liberation forces need to be united to build the country in the spirit of the liberation war.

Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon said there is no alternative but to form a coalition among all progressive political forces to face the prevailing situation.

Gono Forum General Secretary Saifuddin Ahmed Manik and Secretary General of the Communist Party of Bangladesh Muzahidul Islam Selim also spoke.

The JSD (Rob), another faction of the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, also organised a discussion at the National Press Club to mark the founding anniversary.

"We have to introduce bicameral legislature instead of the present parliamentary system if we want to get the benefit of our independence," founding general secretary of the party ASM Abdur Rob said.

"We have to form a federal form of government to get rid of the bureaucratic system," he added.

Presiding over the meeting, JSD President Noor Alam Ziku said killing, arson, rape, abduction and corruption have become a common phenomenon in the society.

"Education, health and others service-oriented sectors have broken down and both local and foreign investors are losing their interest to invest here," he added.

He urged all progressive political parties, professional groups and mass people to be united in order to establish

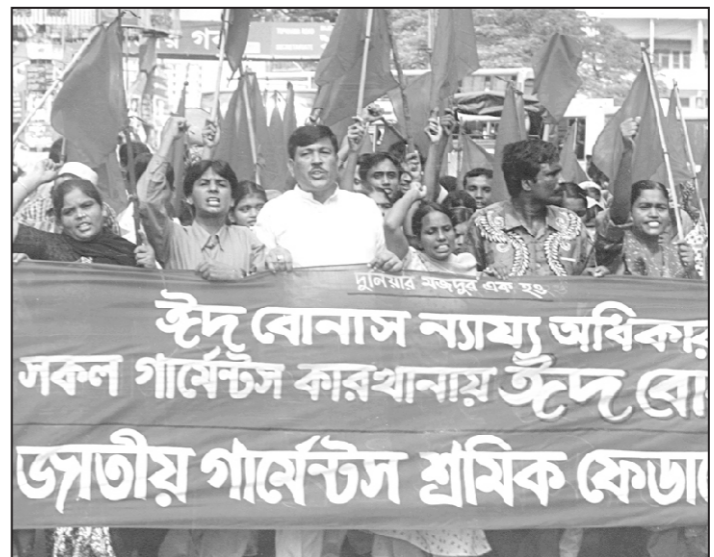
a truly democratic country.

Former minister Shafiqul Gani Swapan, Dr Jafrullah Chowdhury, Dr Tofael Ahmed and Dr Abdul Khaleque also spoke.

Earlier in the morning, the JSD

leaders placed wreath on the graves of

late founder member Major MA Jalil, Mohammad Shahjahan and Kazi Aref Ahmed.



The Jatiya Garments Sramik Federation stages a demonstration in the city yesterday demanding festival bonus for all garments workers ahead of Eid.

PHOTO: STAR

Saarc journalists' confce begins today

UNB, Dhaka

A two-day conference of editors and journalists of Saarc countries begins at Hotel Sheraton in the city today.

The information ministry has arranged the first ever Saarc (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) journalists' conference.

Information Minister Tariqul Islam will attend the inaugural session as chief guest.

Four editors and two journalists from the host country and an editor and a journalist each from other Saarc countries will take part in the conference.

'Open free kitchens in N-region'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of different organisations, including Communist Party of Bangladesh, yesterday urged the government to open free kitchens for the people in the northern region where a famine-like situation has been prevailing.

They also demanded immediate distribution of foodgrains through VGF cards and launch of food-for-work programmes.

They said many people have died of starvation there, but the government did not take any step to provide assistance for them.