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Fire breaks out at office of speaker

He terms it sabotage
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Security has been tightened in an around the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban following a "mysterious" blaze in front of the speaker's office and in two other rooms yesterday morning that burned some documents.

Security personnel immediately doused the fire at the three points on two different floors of the building. The closed-circuit television cameras of the Sangsad Bhaban were closed when the incident occurred, sources said.

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar, who was not in his office at the time, termed the incident a 'sabotage'

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ELECTORAL REFORMS

Consensus hope fading away

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The possibility of a consensus between the ruling alliance and the opposition on electoral reforms seems to be fading away, raising the spectre of confrontation on the streets ahead of the next polls.

Political analysts say the recent developments regarding formation of the proposed committee to address the reform agenda suggest there is little hope for a peaceful settlement.

Awami League (AL) led 14-party opposition combine will boycott the dialogue in case of 'anti-liberation forces' being allowed to be on the committee while the ruling BNP maintains that the components of the four-party alliance should naturally take part in the talks.

The caretaker government, which will assume power in October next, will have great difficulties in conducting the next election if contentious issues like

reforms in the caretaker government and electoral systems are left for them to resolve, observed the political analysts.

The main opposition AL on Friday decided to intensify its street agitation to press home its argument for reforms. The party and its allies had already declared that they will neither contest nor accept any election without reforms.

The ruling alliance, on the other

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Family hopes for state honour for martyr Matiur's remains

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Family members of Birshreshtha Matiur Rahman yesterday hoped the remains of Matiur would be received with due state honour and buried at a place where the nation can pay tribute to the national hero.

Hailing Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's initiative to bring back the remains of Matiur from Pakistan, the family members at a press conference at the National Press Club in Dhaka said they still do not know when his remains will be brought back here.

They expressed their deep dissatisfaction over the government's decision to bury him at

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Kansat agitators attack cops, damage vehicles

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The power-starved people of Kansat yesterday attacked law enforcers, injuring 10 including an additional superintendent of police, as they continued their demonstrations and observed hartal for the second day.

The angry mob also damaged three police vehicles and eight trucks at Mobarakpur near Kansat when the police were escorting the goods-laden trucks from Sonamasjid land port in the early hours.

The injured include Additional SP of Chapainawabganj Mahbul Alam, Havildar Ashraf, Constable Babu, police vehicle driver Anarul

and several truck drivers, said the police confirming the incident.

Ashraf was admitted to a local hospital while others were given first aid, Additional SP Mahub said. The damaged vehicles were kept at Kansat Palli Bidyut Samity office, headed.

The mob started pelting stones at the policemen when they were escorting three trucks after clearing barricades from the Sonamasjid road at about 4:00am. They also beat up the cops and truck drivers.

After an hour, the police were withdrawn from the scene where four people were killed and over 100 injured on Thursday in a clash

between the BNP activists and locals demanding uninterrupted electricity supply.

As the people agitating for electricity put barricades on Kansat-Sonamasjid road after the clash, some 150 trucks loaded with imported Indian onion were kept stranded at the land port. Importers and local traders said about 5,000 tonnes of onion in the trucks and godowns have been left to perish.

"The situation has turned worse as we cannot even properly store the onions for frequent load-shedding," said Nazrul Islam, an importer.

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Oli assault on criminals within party to persist

ABDULLAH - AL MAHMUD, Ctg

Ruling BNP stalwart Col (ret'd) Oli Ahmed MP says he will stick to his stance against criminals and corrupt elements in the party as his candid public remarks in this regard have triggered speculations about a fresh polarisation in BNP politics in Chittagong as well as his political future.

Oli Ahmed has now come into media focus for publicly speaking of BNP's indulgence to bad elements inside the party and negligence towards its dedicated and tested leaders.

The BNP Standing Committee member and lawmaker from Chittagong-13 (Chandanaish) constituency at a rally at Anowara



Oli Ahmed

on Tuesday asked the party high command to identify and take measures against criminals in the party.

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MORGUE IN MESS

Macabre livelihood

After handling 75,000 bodies, Sekandar wants to quit

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

After 25 years of cutting through some 75,000 bodies, many of them decomposed, in the 20 feet by 25 feet dissection room at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) morgue, it is time he quit, feels Sekandar.

"I never had happiness in my life," laments the tall, sturdy Dom (morgue assistant) with weary, sad eyes. To him life has been predestined to follow the footsteps of his father, uncles and grandfather, who had also trudged

on the grisly tasks of dissecting bodies at the morgue for autopsy.

He was a shoo-in for the job as a successor to his forefathers when he started the trade at only 17 out of a pressing need for livelihood. "We were poor and my father had grown old. As the eldest son, I knew it was my responsibility to look after the family. And I could not object to my father's wishes," Sekandar reminisces.

Since then, it has been a round the clock occupation of bathing blood-soaked bodies, storing them

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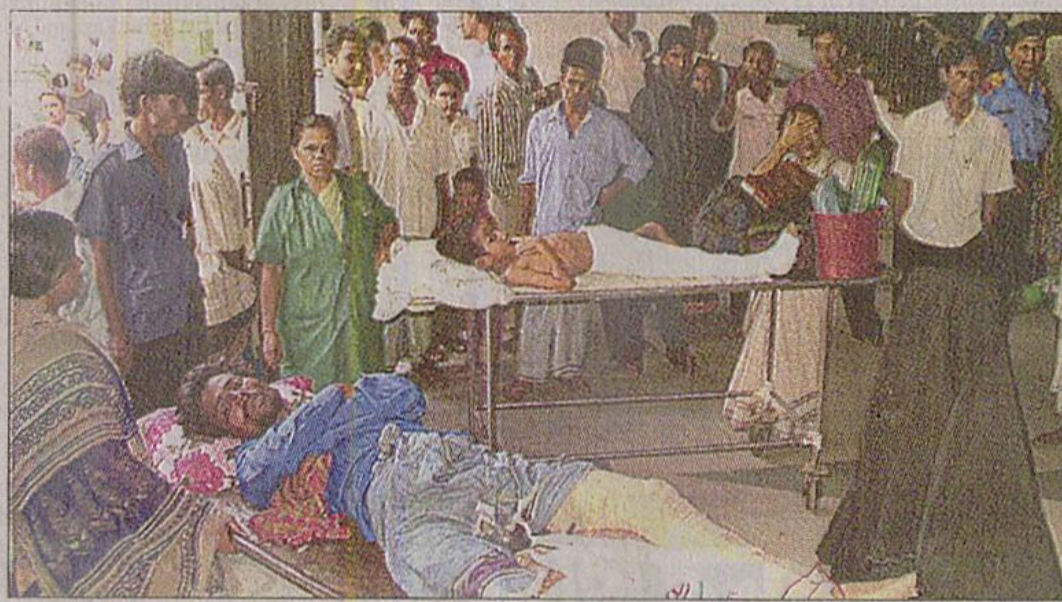


PHOTO: STAR

Patients at Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) are being shifted to other hospitals as the intern doctors continued their strike for the fourth consecutive day yesterday.

Patients desert hospital as Ctg interns' strike enters day 4


OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Services at Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) virtually collapsed yesterday causing sufferings to the patients as an indefinite strike by the intern doctors entered into its fourth consecutive day, while CMCH authorities continue to maintain their indifference to the situation.

Doctors in different wards yesterday forced many of the admitted patients to leave the hospital to cope with the immense pressure from the inflow of new patients. Some of the doctors were

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