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# The Daily Star

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## Foundation will be laid by end of next year, hopes minister

# WB reassessment report on Jamuna bridge by Nov

By Moinuddin Naser

While a high-powered World Bank team was reassessing the viability of the Jamuna Bridge before giving its final report, Communications Minister Col (Rtd) Oli Ahmed Thursday hoped that the foundation of the bridge would be laid by the end of next year.

"I am hopeful about the bridge and the foundation will be laid by the end of next year by the grace of Allah", he told this correspondent in an optimistic tone.

The Communications Minister led the Bangladesh side at the talks during the fortnight-long visit of the World Bank team.

The team will submit its report by end of November.

Meanwhile, the World Bank President Lewis T Preston assured Finance Minister Saifur Rahman in Bangkok that a decision would be taken about the bridge project "very soon". Saifur Rahman told the World Bank President about the high priority the Bangladesh Government attached to the multipurpose project and that people, irrespective of different shades of political opinion, were giving surcharges for early implementation of the project.

The WB team, at several rounds of talks with the Bangladesh side in Dhaka, reviewed in detail the economic viability of the bridge and also

## Khaleda, Mahathir agree to expand trade, cooperation

### C'wealth leaders turn attention to South African sanctions

HARARE, Oct 17: Bangladesh and Malaysia today agreed to increase bilateral trade and cooperation for the mutual benefit of the two countries, reports BSS.

This was decided at an exclusive meeting held between Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and her Malaysian counterpart Dr Mahathir Mohammed at the International Conference Centre here this morning.

A spokesman said the two leaders exchanged views on bilateral, regional and international issues during their meeting lasting more than half an hour.

Dr Mahathir stressed that the two countries should maintain close link in all fields for mutual benefit of the two peoples.

He said the Joint Economic Commission meeting would be held in Malaysia this year where efforts would be made to increase trade between the two countries.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia would import manpower from Bangladesh both unskilled and skilled labourers and professionals including engineers and doctors.

Malaysia would also extend help to Bangladesh in rubber plantation through providing expertise, he added.

He also stressed the need for close cooperation between ASEAN and SAARC.

Dr Mahathir maintained that there should be exchange of visits by leaders of the two democratic countries.

Begum Khaleda Zia extended an invitation to Dr Mahathir to visit Bangladesh which the latter accepted.

The Malaysian Premier also invited Begum Zia to visit his country.

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman was also present on the occasion.

Another report adds, Begum Zia while addressing the Bangladesh community at a reception in Zimbabwe said: "The government would strive hard to improve the country's economic condition to change the lot of the people."

The reception was held at the residence of Bangladesh High Commissioner here yesterday evening.

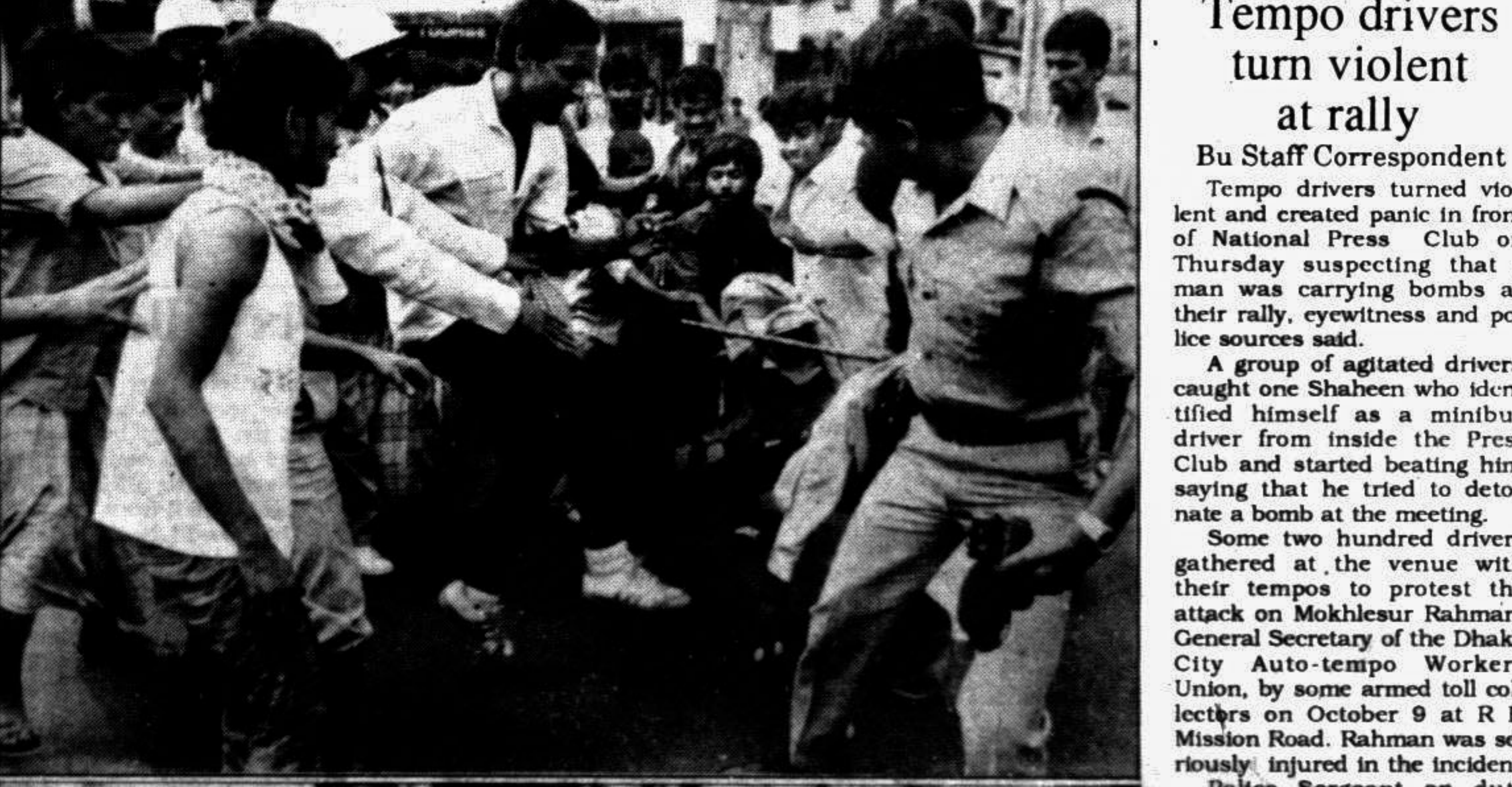
Begum Zia said her government had inherited a ravaged economy left behind by the autocratic regime during the last nine years. "The previous government had plundered national wealth and economy in the name of so-called development," she said.

She mentioned that after taking over responsibility of the government she was phasing out certain sanctions recommended by Commonwealth foreign ministers meeting in New Delhi last month, while holding out for vital financial sanctions to remain in place until a transition government has been established.

Mandela has been busy of the fringes of the summit trying to keep the South African issue alive as the Commonwealth begins to look inward, focusing more on its own future than that of South Africa for the first time in decades.

He lunched Wednesday with British Prime Minister John Major and had breakfast today.

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Top: Agitated auto-tempo drivers landing kicks and blows on a mini-bus driver (partially visible), who was rumoured to be a saboteur in their rally held in front of the National Press Club yesterday. Bottom: Policemen are rescuing the victim after mass beating. — Star photo

## Experts say refloating possible

# Uncertainty looms over BCCI

By Shahiduzzaman Khan

Uncertainty over salvaging the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (Overseas) Limited (BCCI) in Bangladesh deepens as there is no sign yet of any high-level team arriving from Abu Dhabi to Bangladesh.

No official statement on the part of the Finance Ministry or the Bangladesh Bank has been issued as to the future strategy in the light of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) not offering any restructuring package.

On the positive side, Agrani Bank has so far disbursed an amount of Taka 70 crore approximately to a number of depositors — both local and foreign currency deposit holders. This has provided considerable relief to several account holders of BCCI in Bangladesh but did not raise any hope that BCCI would be refloated again, perhaps with a new image and new entity.

Meanwhile in other areas, new developments — both positive and negative — have affected the operations of the collapsed Bank. According to sources, in London, four depositors of BCCI, mostly of South Asian origin, are studying possibilities of taking legal actions against the Price Waterhouse, the Bank's auditors, for negligence. Sources close to the Asian depositors, many of whom have gone bankrupt due to the suspension of BCCI operations, argue that Price Waterhouse failed to detect the so-called 'wrong doings' within BCCI even after a year the allegations were made before it was shut down by the Bank of England.

At the same time, time is running out with the deadline for the liquidation of the Bank in the United Kingdom as well as Cayman Islands. If the liquidation process goes on schedule, the operations of BCCI in all other countries including those in Asia will be adversely affected.

On the positive side, there are indications that the stage is set for the takeover of the BCCI, Hong Kong, by an Indonesian group. There are also hopes that some BCCI branches in India, including

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## Team of ministers in Rangpur to see post-flood food situation

From Our Correspondent

RANGPUR, Oct 17: A team of ministers and BNP leaders led by the Law and Justice Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz, who is also the Acting Prime Minister visited Rangpur today to reassess the post-flood food situation here.

Later in the day the Law Minister told a gathering demanding work instead of relief that the government would gear up relief programmes and provide jobs.

Mirza Golam Hafiz said that the present government was committed to stand by the distressed humanity and it has done so.

The Law and Justice Minister also met officials of the greater Rangpur district at the Rangpur Circuit House. Deputy commissioners, Civil Surgeons and concerned officials of Rangpur, Gaibandha, Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat and Kurigram attended the meeting.

Food Minister Shamsul Islam Khan, Health Minister Chowdhury Kamal Uddin Yusuf and State Minister for Relief Lutfur Rahman Khan and Begum Khurshid Jahan MP accompanied the Law Minister during the day-long trip.

The Law Minister contacted

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## BNP misusing relief while people dying: Hasina

Awami League president Sheikh Hasina Thursday bitterly criticised the BNP government for what she said maintaining silence over the famine in northern districts resulting in hundreds of people dead, reports UNB.

"The people are fighting death from starvation while the ruling party is misusing and misappropriating relief goods," she alleged.

Hasina, also Leader of the Opposition in parliament, was speaking at a discussion meeting held at her party central office marking the death anniversary of late Awami League leader and former Speaker Abdul Malek Ukil.

The opposition leader also criticised statements of the ministers claiming that none had died for want of food. "Such false statement is but mockery with the dying people."

Hasina said those who did politics capitalising on the 1974 famine are now in power. What will they tell the people about the famine during their rule?

In a flashback on the socio-economic condition in 1974, she said the country had suffered from famine at a time when it was ravaged by war, its economy crippled and a high

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### NEWS BRIEFS

**PM returns Oct 20**  
 By Staff Correspondent  
 Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, now attending the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Harare, is likely to return home on October 20.

She was earlier scheduled to come back on October 22. A BNP source told The Daily Star that the Prime Minister will cut short her stay in Harare to attend some important business at home. The source did not elaborate.

**Salam in US for medical checkup**  
 By Staff Correspondent  
 Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) Secretary General and LGD Minister Abdus Salam Talukder has gone to the United States for a medical checkup.

Talukder had a heart surgery a few years ago. He is expected to return by the first week of next month.

**RU Masters exam date shifted**  
 From Our Correspondent  
 RAJSHAHI, Oct 17: The Rajshahi University authorities have announced fresh date for holding of MA, M Sc, M Com and MBS examinations of different departments for the year 1988 will begin from November 25, 1991 instead of November 10, 1991.

**Dhaka included as observer**  
 Bangladesh has been included as one of the observers of the Commonwealth observer group to monitor the Zambian presidential and parliamentary elections on October 31, reports BSS.

## Two killed in BDR firing at Joypurhat

JOYPURHAT, Oct 17: Two people were killed and seven others injured in BDR firing during a melee at a negotiating meeting at Dargatoli Hat in the sadar upazila, reports UNB.

One of the dead was identified as a school student and another a rickshawpuller.

Opposition political parties staged demonstration and called for a dawn-to-noon hartal in the district town tomorrow protesting the killings.

Witnesses said an altercation took place between the BDR men and the local people over an Indian bicycle they had seized from one Ferdous a month back.

The people of the area became angry when they saw a BDR man riding the cycle at Dargatoli Hat.

Later in the evening, a negotiating meeting between the BDR and the local people was held at the Dargatoli school field, but the meeting ended in a fiasco.

At a stage, the BDR men allegedly fired 14 rounds of gunshot, killing rickshawpuller Mujibur Molla (38) on the spot. Bullet pierced his belly, witnesses and hospital sources said.

Meanwhile, the administration constitute a one-man judicial/enquiry committee with the Additional District Magistrate to probe the incident.

## Hun Sen dumps Heng Samrin for Sihanouk

PHNOM PENH, Oct 17: Prime Minister Hun Sen kicked off an extraordinary ruling party congress today by throwing his support behind former opponent Prince Norodom Sihanouk as President of Cambodia, reports AFP.

The Prime Minister emphatically proposed that the party dump its uncharismatic leader Heng Samrin and instead endorse Prince Sihanouk in post-peace plan elections.

"I think it is necessary to have a Cambodian personality with enough influence" to sway Cambodia's electorate to vote for the party, Hun Sen said.

Heng Samrin — the current head of state and General Secretary of the Communist Party — sat looking tired and downcast as the announcement was made.

A party source said Hun Sen and Heng Samrin were together late last night in a heated political dispute, with Hun Sen demanding Heng Samrin's resignation. Samrin refused.

The elections — mandated by a United Nations peace plan to be signed by Cambodia's four factions in Paris next week — are scheduled for early 1993.

Hun Sen, who stressed he was making a personal statement rather than a government proclamation, delivered a 15-page address.

Heng Samrin also gave a short, two-page address to the congress of the People's Revolutionary Party of Kampuchea — which will officially change its name to the Cambodian People's Party and usher in sweeping reforms in the two-day session.

The new platform eliminates all references to communism and socialism and pledges to put democracy and a free-market economy into action. It will become the latest Soviet supported regime to shed traditional dogma.

The reforms — drafted by the central committee in two weeks of meeting are to be rubber-stamped by 320 carefully selected delegates.

Western and local political observers here say reform is the only way to save the party from internal division and ultimate destruction.

The party will have to compete for votes against the factions it has been fighting for almost 13 years of civil war.

Only 30,000 people out of an estimated population of eight million Cambodians belong to the party.

The reforms seek to put a "liberal democracy and multi-party system" into action, according to the new platform.

"The Cambodians have renounced all communist ideology," said a diplomat from the former socialist bloc. "The new

Cambodian programme has nothing socialist, nothing communist about it."

Cambodia will thus become the first country in Indo-China to allow opposition parties to form, but speakers urged congress delegates who might be thinking of breaking away to give the new improved party a chance.

Several former member of the Phnom Penh government — including one jailed for forming his own party prematurely — are poised to form independent parties.

## Dhaka-Aricha road transport strike called off

ARICHA, Oct 17: Bus strike on the Dhaka-Aricha highway was called off today following negotiations between the administration and transport union leaders, ending communication blockade between the capital and 36 northern and southern districts, reports UNB.

The Dhaka-Aricha Transport Workers Union called the wildcat strike after a show-cause notice issued by the Dhaka 3rd Labour Court halted the trade union's election scheduled for October 18.

Gabrial Bus Terminal Sramik Committee Secretary Shahajan Khan said the indefinite strike was called off after "successful" talks this afternoon with the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority Chairman and the Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka-North.

The authorities assured the union leaders of action against the four expelled members of the transport union and also of withdrawing the case filed against the union on October 14, he said.

No buses plied the busiest highway, excepting few three-wheelers and trucks. Taking advantage, some autorickshaws even charged a passenger Tk 100-150 instead of normal fare of Tk 30. Editorial on Page 4