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NEWS BRIEFS
Ahmed Fazlur Rahman dead
 Ahmed Fazlur Rahman, a former secretary and an accused of the so-called Agartala Conspiracy case died in London yesterday (Sunday). He was 65. He left behind wife, two sons, three daughters, grand children and many well wishers to mourn his death, reports UNB.

Port workers call off strike
 Five organisations of Chittagong port workers announced postponement of the indefinite strike scheduled to begin from December 8 to press for their demands, an official handout said in Dhaka yesterday (Sunday). The decision to postpone the strike was taken by the leaders of the five organisations following assurance by the Chittagong Port Authority, reports UNB.

Probe body
 From Staff Correspondent
 The Mongla Port Authority constituted a two-member committee to probe into the alleged violation of priority of unloading ships by the Harbour Department of the Port.
 The Harbour Department of the Mongla Port Authority is learnt to have violated priority rule by allowing unloading of cement instead of foodgrains.

Pan Am bombing: 2 face trial
 DAKAR, Dec 8: Libya will put on trial two nationals accused by Britain and the United States of blowing up a Pan Am plane in 1988. Foreign Minister Ibrahim Mohammed Beshari announced Sunday. The Minister in Dhaka for an Islamic summit also said that the Libyan judicial authorities will try them. If they are guilty they will be punished. The Minister gave the clearest explanation yet of Libya's approach to the Western charges, which is to offer cooperation short of surrendering the two suspects, reports Reuter.

3 killed as Shibir, BCL clash in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Dec 8: A fierce clash between two rival student groups left three people dead in Farhadabad area of Hathazari Upazila today (Sunday) reports UNB.

Of the dead, two were identified as Kazi Shyamol and Zafar Ahmed of Chhatra League (S-A). The political identity of third victim Didarul Alam was not immediately known.

All three died on the spot following an encounter between the activists of Chhatra League (S-A) and the Islami Chhatra Shibir. Pro-NDP Ganatantrik Chhatra Shakti is learnt to have backed the Shibir.

About eight people also sustained injuries during the 30-minute clash that erupted at around 4-30 pm. Both sides reportedly used automatic weapons and cocktails.

Today's bloody incident was a sequel to an old political rivalry between the two groups.

Witnesses said both the groups equipped with modern arms were patrolling the area in microbus and jeep since morning. The clash started when they finally confronted each other at Farhadabad area near Kathirhat Bazar.

The bodies were lying at the spot till 9 pm.

Chittagong SP Sabbir Ali rushed to Farhadabad with a strong contingent of police to make on the spot investigation.

Immediately after the incident, a group of people set afire the house of one Idris Member at Farhadabad area.

Chhatra League brought out a procession in Chittagong city this evening to protest the killing of their fellow activists.

The killing of the three people created a panic in the



A street in downtown Dhaka during hartal hours yesterday. — Star photo

OIC summit opens in Dakar today Most Arab states may not show up

DAKAR, Dec 8: The sixth summit of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) is set to open here tomorrow, reports AFP.

Arab diplomatic sources said here today that only three Arab leaders — King Hussein of Jordan, PLO chief Yasser Arafat and Lebanese President Elias Hraqi — would be definitely attending the parley which coincides with the fourth anniversary of the Palestinian uprising in the Israeli-occupied territories.

Iranian President Ali Akbar Rafsanjani as well as most Asian and African leaders were expected in Dakar by Sunday evening.

Saudi King Fahd — who supplied Senegal with a large chunk of the 130 million dollars necessary to build the infrastructure and prepare for the summit — will be sending Crown Prince Abdullah Ibn Abdel Aziz. Riyadh announced on Friday. Western diplomats here said the monarch was ill.

Tunisian President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali is also sick, according to his doctors, who recommended a four-day rest.

Diplomatic sources in Dakar said that King Hassan of Morocco, Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak and his Mauritanian counterpart Maouya Ould Sid Ahmed Taya had all decided not to attend the summit — the first to be hosted by an African nation since the creation of the OIC in 1971.

There was also wide speculation the Libyan leader Colonel Gaddafi would not

Blasts, clashes mark hartal

Blasts, clashes and stray firing incidents marked the eight-hour hartal in the city Sunday disrupting normal life.

The hartal was called by the Awami League in protest against Friday's police action and attack on its meeting allegedly by BNP activists at Bangabandhu Avenue.

At least 30 persons were injured in different incidents as picketers clashed with anti-hartal processionists and with police around the city.

Police fired five teargas shells in Ibrahimpur under Cantonment Thana and in front of the Balaka cinema hall in the morning to disperse agitating processionists. At least 21 persons were arrested by police from around the city during the hartal hours.

Shots were reported to have been fired in Nilkhet and the Dhaka College areas in the morning.

Six persons were brought to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital after being injured in blast. Shamima (32) and Ferdous Ara (28) sustained injuries in a blast when picketers lobbed a cracker on their rickshaw at Islampur at around 10 am. They were released after first aid treatment at the hospital.

Jamal Hossain (14), a street urchin, also sustained injuries from a cracker blast and was admitted in the hospital. Three other office-goers were also admitted in the hospital with injuries from assaults by the picketers.

Picketers damaged about a dozen rickshaws, a number of BRTC buses and some auto-rickshaws around the city.

Road communications came to a halt during the hartal hours but rickshaws were seen plying in most of the areas as time went on. Most major streets turned into giant sidewalks as thousands of people walked to their destinations. Attendance in offices was thin.

Educational institutions remained closed during the day and some schools had to reschedule their on-going final examinations. Shops and commercial establishments around the city kept their shutters down. Only some pharmacies and restaurants stayed open.

A few tempos and baby taxis also plied between Mahakhali and Tongi.

From six in the morning the hartal supporters brought out processions and started picketing at different points around the city.

The pickets threw an explosive on a BRTC bus at Farmgate at around 9-30 am. Police chased the hartal-supporters from the spot. Vehicular movement including rickshaws came to a halt in the area after the incident.

All industrial units in Tejgaon area were closed during the hartal hours as pickets

UZ chairmen call 6-hour hartal today

By Staff Correspondent
 The joint convener of the Bangladesh Upazila Parishad Chairman Samity was arrested by Sunday on the eve of a nation wide six-hour hartal called by the samity for today (Monday) to protest the abolition of the Upazila Parishads through an ordinance last month.

Our Gazipur Correspondent adds: Ahsanullah Master, former chairman of the Gazipur Upazila Parishad was arrested by Gazipur police from the pourashava office at around 2.30 pm. He was later produced before the Sadar Upazila Magistrate. He was

Shopowners begin two-hour token strike tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent
 Shopowners in Dhaka City will go on a two-hour token strike from tomorrow (Tuesday) to press home their five-point demands.

A meeting of the Dhaka City Central Market Convening Committee on Sunday said the shops will start functioning from 11 am everyday instead of 9 am.

The demands of the committee include stopping harassment in the name of anti-smuggling drive, identifying the real smugglers, checking toll collection.

The meeting presided by M A Zaman, joint convener of the committee urged the government to amend the baggage rule to ban import of foreign goods produced in the country. It demanded inclusion of local items in the duty-free shops.

The meeting also demanded financial support for the shopowners against the mortgage of possession deed of shops for activating the marketing channel of local goods. It further urged the government to make local goods competitive with foreign goods through different tax measures.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia inspecting the guard of honour drawn from the three services prior to her departure for Dakar to attend the OIC summit Sunday. — PID photo

'Khaleda being lured into trap'

By Staff Correspondent
 Acting chief of the Awami League Abdus Samad Azad on Sunday cautioned Prime Minister Begum Zia saying that she was stepping right into the conspiracy that she had admitted was being hatched to fail democracy.

You (Khaleda) are speaking of democracy, but acting as an autocrat being pulled by an invisible straw, Azad said while addressing a public meeting as chief guest in the city Sunday afternoon.

The Awami League with other democratic forces would uproot all intrigues against democracy and resist the conspirators, Samad Azad cautioned.

Organised by the city branch of the Party, the meeting followed an eight-hour city-wide hartal observed at the call of the AL.

The hartal was called in protest against Friday's attack on the Party meeting being held to observe the fall of Ershad's autocratic regime.

Addressing the largely-attended meeting, Azad commented that people of all walks of life had voiced their protests against all sorts of repressions and misdeeds by the government of Prime Minister Begum Zia.

Strongly condemning the armed attack on Friday's AL meeting by police and what he termed 'terrorists of the ruling party', Azad emphatically said that such autocratic steps would not even spare the ruling BNP chief Begum Zia.

He said that the Khaleda government had exceeded the limits during Friday's incidents, spoiled the AL programme and surpassed the inhuman acts of the past autocratic rulers.

Quoting verses of the Holy Quran, Azad asked the head of the government to refrain from further excesses.

To take to the streets is anybody's democratic and constitutional right and curbing such a right would be tolerated no more. Removing opponents from the streets is a very old practice by the autocratic rulers, Samad pointed out.

The AL leader pointed out disunity in the government saying that the speech by the Prime Minister and the Press Note by her government on the police firing on the AL meeting were totally contradictory.

Azad claimed that his Party believed in the politics of national consensus and that was why it wanted to resolve all national problems in the Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) through mutual discussions. He also stressed the need to let all the parliamentary committees work smoothly and effectively.

Abdus Samad Azad also warned the ruling party of repeatedly destroying the fruits of mass movement led by the Awami League. Commenting on the cancellation of the Victory Day parade, Azad said it was a conspiracy against the pro-liberation spirit. No previous government, not even that of Zia, dared to take such a step, Azad remarked.

The AL leader also announced a nationwide agitation December 12 to protest all injustices by the present government including Friday's attack on the AL meeting and to demand resolving of national problems like price-hike and terrorism and force the authorities to meet the demands of different professional

Body to conduct fresh autopsy of Mukhter

By Staff Correspondent
 A three-member medical team was formed at Sir Salmullah Medical College Hospital (SSMCH) Sunday to conduct the fresh autopsy of the body of Hafez Mukhter Hossain.

Mary Janet Syamoli, who was arrested on December 1 in connection with the mysterious death of Mukhter, will be produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court today (Monday) and her bail petition will be moved.

Our SSMCH Correspondent adds: The three-member medical team will be led by Dr Mohammad Abdullah, a Professor of Forensic Department of the college.

The body of Hafez Mukhter Hossain, chairman of now defunct Narayanganj Sadar upazila, was not exhumed till Sunday from Aliganj graveyard.

Mukhter Hossain was found dead with a bullet wound in his head in a car parked near Holy Cross College in November 29 evening.

Syamoli, a girl friend of Mukhter, told police that she and her six years old daughter Pinky were with the chairman in the parked car when he committed suicide.

Police is yet to receive the CID reports of the finger print on the recovered revolver, the used bullet and its pellet.

Earlier, autopsy report of Mukhter suggested that his death was a suicide.

UZ system has failed: Review body

The first meeting of the Local Government Infrastructure Review Commission was held in Dhaka on Sunday with Information Minister Nazmul Huda, its chairman, in the chair, reports BSS.

Initiating the discussion, Local Government Minister Abdus Salam Talukdar explained the background of the formation of the Commission in determining the desirable and people-oriented infrastructure of the local government system and repeal of the Local Government Ordinance of 1982.

He said from long experience of the upazila system it was found that this system could not earn the confidence of the people because of clear violation of the system in at least twenty-four areas.

This system could not set up any example of continuous development as this system was fostered from above and because it was inconsistent with the hopes and aspirations of the people, he added.

The minister further said that despite pumping huge amounts of money and resources, the Local Government Institutions have failed to achieve self-reliance under the upazila system.

He urged the commission to make realistic recommendations for restructuring the Local Government in the light of the objective situation and

Begum Rokeya's birthday today

By Staff Correspondent
 The birth and death anniversary of Begum Rokeya, a pioneer in the movement for the emancipation of Muslim women in Bengal, will be observed in the country today.

Begum Rokeya was born on this day of 1880 in the village Patrabard, Rangpur, and died on the same day in 1932.

Braving the male-dominated society of her time, Begum

Bangladesh-UK joint chamber in offing

From Mostafa Kamal Majumder
 LONDON: A Bangladesh-British chamber of commerce is being launched from here soon to help promote trade between the two countries.

Business circles in the United Kingdom told The Daily Star that the Association of British Chambers of Commerce and the Registrar of Companies House, England

6 injured in JCD-BCL clash in Khulna

From Our Correspondent
 KHULNA, Dec 8: At least six people were injured in a clash between the activists of BNP student front Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and pro-Awami League Bangladesh Chhatra League this evening.

Three bombs were set off during the clash.

Witnesses said the BCL brought out a torch procession in the city this evening in support of tomorrow's hartal and protesting Friday's police action on an Awami League rally in

Li may be softer on border issue with India

NEW DELHI, Dec 8: A visit to India by Chinese Premier Li Peng next week will revive talks about the disputed Indo-China border, which has been a theater of war and political tension for the two powers, reports AP.

It will be the first visit to India in 31 years by a Chinese premier, bringing together the leaders of the world's two most populous nations.

The two countries, each opening its long-insulated economy to outsiders, will be exploring opportunities to exchange goods rather than threats across their 2,400-mile border.

The visit comes at a time when China seems intent on easing tensions with its Asian neighbors, from South Korea to Vietnam, raising hope in New Delhi that Li may show a softer line on the border issue.

But it also comes as India's 6-month-old government — focused on revamping its economy — is drawing criticism for a stagnant foreign policy, and seems unlikely to offer new initiatives toward China.

Li arrives Dec 11 for six days to officially return a 1988 visit by the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. The Gandhi trig set relations on a new course following decades of confrontation that peaked in a 21-day war in 1962.

Li will renew his acquaintance with Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao, who was with Gandhi in China as his foreign minister.

The Indian army has 11 mountain divisions along the frontier, and China is believed to have as many or more.

"There's been a military buildup on both sides," said K N Ramakrishnan, a China expert at the Institute for Defense Studies and Analysis.

"I have no illusion that on this trip the border issue will be sorted out," said Ramakrishnan. "Certain broad principles could be worked out and mutual understanding could be enhanced that would create conditions for more talks," but that's the best that can be expected, he said.

China has hinted it could agree on a settlement recognizing the currently held lines, but India has so far refused to make what it would see as a territorial concession.

AFP says, "the most important thing is that for the first time in three decades the outstanding territorial issue will not be the motivating or even the central concern of this visit," said Saturday the respected Indian weekly front-line.

Topmost on the agenda is likely to be China's attitude and military supplies to Pakistan, Washington's new attempts to balance its relations with New Delhi and Islamabad, US president George Bush's efforts towards a "new world order," Afghanistan, Burma, Cambodia and, last but not least, the question of regional nuclear non-proliferation.