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Accord eludes JS Indemnity bill body again

By Nurul Kabir

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Indemnity (repeal) Bill once again failed to decide the fate of the bill in its 19th meeting yesterday morning.

The committee, according to sources, however, will meet again before Parliament goes into its next session in mid-April.

Mohammad Nasim MP of Awami League (AL) introduced the bill in Parliament on August 8 seeking removal of the constitutional bar in trying people involved in the killing

of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The Parliament formed a 15-member special committee with the Law Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz as its chairman to scrutinise the bill.

The committee, after holding a total of 18 meetings till February 18, the closing date of the last session of Parliament, failed to reach consensus on the issue.

The standing committee, however, sought a period of two months for the last time from Parliament to try to unan-

imously decide the fate of the bill.

The last deadline expires on April 19.

Yesterday's meeting was attended by Mirza Hafiz and Nazmul Huda of ruling BNP, Abdus Samad Azad, Sajeda Chowdhury, Mohammad Nasim and Shudhangshu Shekhar Halder of AL and Suranjit Sengupta of Ganotantri Party.

According to sources, the yesterday's meeting was called by the Law Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz on emergency basis.

'People's Court' finds Golam Azam 'punishable by death'

By Staff Correspondent

The People's Court at the historic Suhrawardy Udyan on Thursday found Golam Azam guilty and pronounced the Jamaat chief 'punishable by death sentence.'

A 12-member bench of judges at the trial gave its verdict against Azam of 12 charges including genocide, arson and rape during the country's 1971 War of Independence.

The court also urged the Government to take legal action against Golam Azam, now interned in the Dhaka Central Jail for violating the Constitution of the Country.

Tens of thousands of peo-

ple who thronged the venue of the public trial braving an sweltering heat of the season and defying Government warning against the court raised their hands in support of the verdict and shouted 'death ... death to Golam Azam.'

The public trial took place peacefully at the same venue where the historic March 7 address of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was delivered and the December 16 surrender of the Pakistan forces took place in 1971.

A heavy contingent of riot police cordoned off the Shahbagh, Doh Chattrai, Kakrai

Crossing and the Press Club areas and asked people not to proceed towards the venue of the trial. Traffic movement in the areas was also restricted. Earlier on Wednesday night, police broke up the trial organisers when they went there to install the stage near the Engineers Institution.

But the police cordons were withdrawn in the face of waves of people carrying banners, placards, festoons and sticks. People being stopped at the entrances of the Suhrawardy Udyan broke into the garden breaking parts of the fence.

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Commentary

Khaleda, Hasina should meet to avert confrontation

By S M Ali

Pro-liberation forces won a victory on the Independence Day by holding a 'public trial' of Golam Azam, finding the Jamaat leader 'guilty' of crimes committed during 1971 and finally recommending to the government that he be sentenced to death.

Contrary to fears expressed by some quarters, the so-called trial was anything but a frenzied kangaroo court, with the

proceeding conducted in a fairly disciplined manner. Except for unfortunate attacks on a couple of newspaper offices by unruly crowds, causing minor damages to the institutions, there were also no major untoward incidents in the city.

The tension prevailing in the city during past two days had not been defused, but its level had certainly been appreciably lowered.

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Ghali's special envoy due March 30

United Nations Under Secretary General Jan Eliasson will arrive in Dhaka on March 30 on a three-day visit to have a close look at the problems of Myanmar Muslim refugees faced by Bangladesh.

Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman told BSS here Friday that the visit of the high UN official underlines the growing importance and concern being expressed by the international community at the unabated influx of the refugees.

See Page 12 Col 5

Delhi leases out Tinbigha June 26

Bangladesh and India have signed an agreement for leasing out Tinbigha to Dhaka, officials here said Friday, reports UNB.

The agreement concluded on Thursday in New Delhi after a series of negotiations at different levels in last 18 years, will be effective from June 26. It will enable Bangladesh to link its enclaves Dahagram and Angarpota.

Indian Foreign Secretary JN Dixit and Bangladesh Additional Foreign Secretary A H Mahmood Ali initialled the accord on behalf of their respective governments.

Indian External Affairs Minister Madhavsinh Solanki told the Lok Sabha on Thursday that India and Bangladesh exchanged letters earlier in the day for implementation of the lease providing the Tinbigha corridor, the agreement for which was signed 10 years back.

He, however, said the sovereignty of the area will continue to vest in India.

Dhaka and New Delhi reached the agreement to finalise the leasing of the corridor on the basis of the agreements between the two countries signed in 1974 and 1982.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman signed the Land Boundary Demarcation Agreement with Indra Gandhi in New Delhi during his visit to India from 12-16 May in 1974.

The then Commerce and Trade Minister, Khondaker Mustaque Ahmed, and former Foreign Minister Dr Kamal Hossain accompanied Sheikh Mujib during the trip.

Fourteenth para of the article 1 of the agreement provides that 'India will retain the southern half of south Berubari Union No 12 and the adjacent enclaves measuring an area of 2.64 square mile approximately, and in exchange

Bangladesh will retain the sovereignty of the area and Angarpota enclaves. India will lease in perpetuity to Bangladesh an area of 178 by 85 metres near Tinbigha to connect Dahagram with Panbari Mouza PS Patgram of Bangladesh.

Another accord was signed between the two countries in 1982 to work out modalities for implementation of the 1974 agreement.

Bangladesh parliament promptly ratified the 1974 agreement and handed over south Berubari to India. But India is yet to endorse the accord even after a lapse of 18 years.

Indian Supreme Court in September, 1990, ruled that the Tinbigha corridor could be leased out to Bangladesh without ratification of the agreement by the parliament and asked the government to implement it as quickly as possible.

See Page 12 Col 8

JKLF chief refuses to call off march

ISLAMABAD, Mar 27: The jailed leader of a Muslim secessionist group refused Friday to call off a march across the cease-fire line dividing Pakistan and Indian-ruled Kashmir, reports AP.

Amanullah Khan, leader of the Jammu-Kashmir Liberation Front that is leading the secessionist movement in Indian-controlled Kashmir, was arrested on Wednesday as a precautionary move.

Authorities fear Monday's march could lead to a fourth war between Islamic Pakistan and predominantly Hindu India.

statement, Amanullah said he had told the group to storm the UN monitored cease-fire line without him.

'We have made the decision of crossing the cease-fire line after considering every aspect. This step will inculcate a new spirit in the freedom fighters,' the statement said.

Riot police and paramilitary troops thwarted a similar three-day march in February. At least 16 people were killed and more than 300 others injured in the attempt.

The Pakistan government has said that the Liberation Front's latest bid to storm the cease-fire line also will be

stopped. India and Pakistan both claim Kashmir, the former princely state divided following the 1947 partition that ended British colonial rule of the subcontinent.

They went to war in 1948 and again in 1965 over Kashmir and fought a third in 1971 that led to the creation of Bangladesh, or what was then East Pakistan.

New Delhi frequently accuses Pakistan of arming, training and harboring militants fighting for the secession of Jammu-Kashmir, India's only Muslim majority state. More than 3,500 people, in-

Independence Day celebrated Vow to protect sovereignty, democracy

By Staff Correspondent

The Independence and National Day was observed throughout the country Thursday with renewed pledge to uphold the spirit of the Liberation War and to protect the independence, sovereignty and democracy.

The day began with the booming of 31-guns and hoisting of national flags atop all public and private buildings.

In the morning, tributes were paid to the millions of martyrs of the Liberation War by laying wreaths at the Jatiya Smriti Shoudha (National Memorial) at Savar. Leaders and workers of political parties, students organisations and socio-cultural organisations gathered at the shoudha to pay their tributes.

The ceremonial Independence and National Day parade of the combined forces was held at the National Parade Square. President Abdur Rahman Biswas took salute and inspected the parade.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia was present during the occasion. Members of the cabinet, diplomats and high civil and military officials were also present.

Smartly turned out contingents of the Army, Navy, Air Force, BDR, Police, BNCC, Ansar and VDF took part in the march past, which was followed by mechanised column of the Army and the flying past by the Air Force.

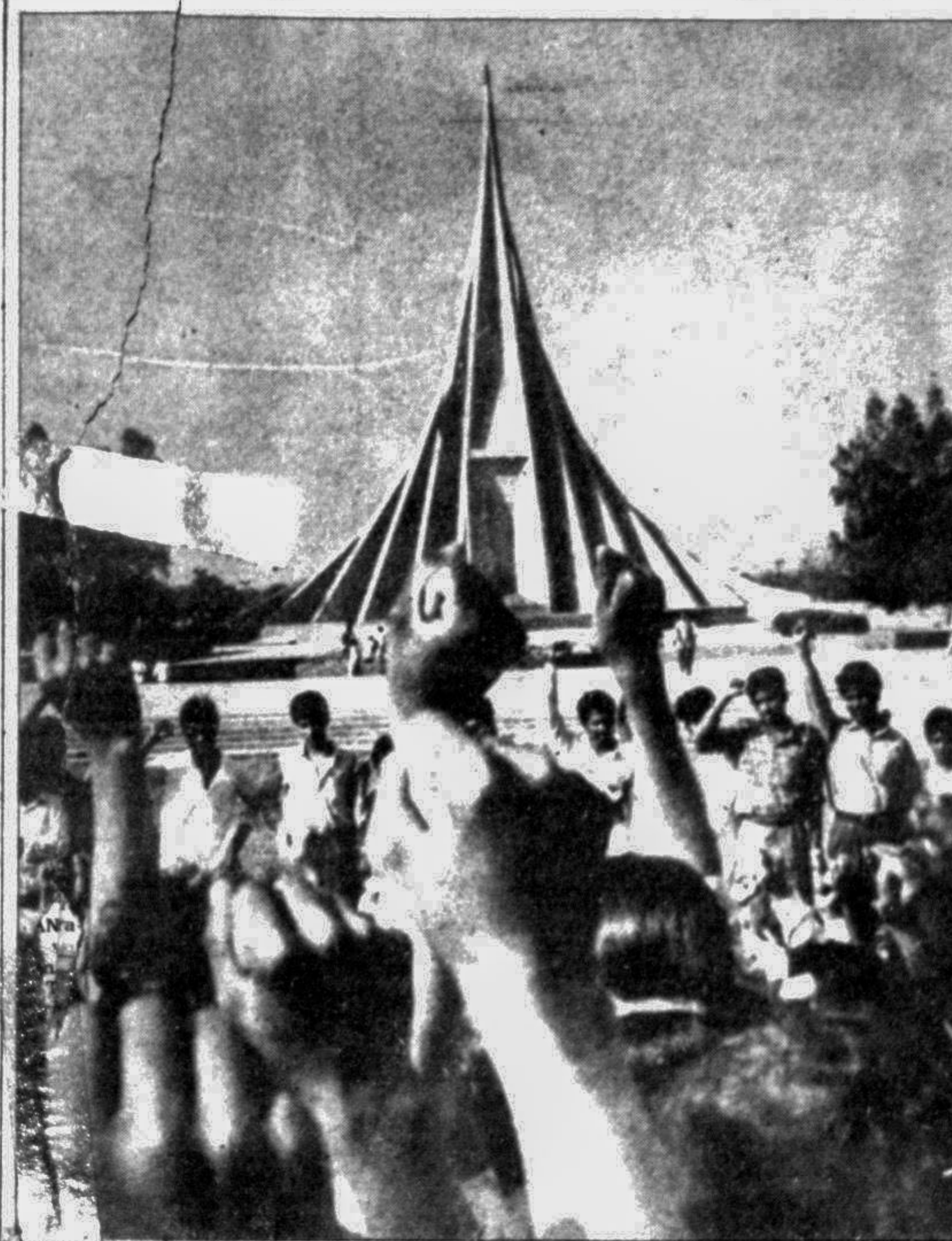
In the evening President and Begum Abdur Rahman Biswas held a reception in celebration of the occasion. Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, cabinet members, heads of diplomatic missions and high civil and military officials were among others who attended the function.

The day was a public holiday. Streets and side-walks were colourfully decorated with national flags and bunting and a number of public and private buildings were illuminated.

Special diets were served in orphanages, hospitals, jails and other institutions during the day. Radio and television broadcast special programmes highlighting the significance of the day. National newspapers brought out special supplements on the day.

At the Savar memorial, wreaths were laid and special prayers were offered on behalf of BNP in the morning. Party leaders Badruddoza Chowdhury, Abdus Salam Talukdar, Rafiqul Islam Mia, Dr Khan-daker Mosharrif Hossain and Tariqul Islam were among others present during the occasion.

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Independence Day pledge at the National Memorial Thursday. Star photo



President Abdur Rahman Biswas taking salute at the Independence Day Parade Thursday. —PID photo

NEWS BRIEFS

Reception at Bangabhaban

President and Begum Abdur Rahman Biswas held a reception in celebration of the 22nd Independence and National Day at Bangabhaban in Dhaka Tuesday.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia attended the reception. Among others, members of the cabinet, high civil and military officials, leaders of political parties and heads of diplomatic missions attended it, reports BSS.

Arms recovered from Sitakunda

CHITTAGONG, Mar 27: Sitakunda police in a drive recovered some arms and ammunition from Chowdhurypar on Wednesday, a police press release said in Dhaka last night. The arms and ammunition included, three foreign made guns, one rifle, three pipe-guns and 18 rounds of bullets, reports BSS.

Dhaka Club holds milad mahfil

Dhaka Club Ltd Friday held a milad mahfil followed by an iftar party on the occasion of Independence and National Day at the club premises, reports UNB

Down to Earth

Our regular weekly column Down to Earth has been dropped today.

Sheri, Iftar timings

Ramzan March Schri Iftar
22 28 6.20 pm
23 29 4.33 8.21 pm

Country's situation critical: Dr Kamal

From Our Correspondent

GOPALGANJ, Mar 27: Dr Kamal Hossain said here today that the situation prevailing in the country was critical.

The Awami League Presidium member said black money was ruining the future of the nation. 'The rulers are now engaged in improving their own lot,' he remarked.

Dr Kamal was speaking as chief guest at the workers' meeting of the local AL unit at the Gopalganj Public Hall. The noted lawyer said that the Indemnity Ordinance must be repealed to consolidate constitutional rule in the country. 'All are equal in the eyes of law,' he pointed out and added, 'But if a killer is kept

See Page 12 Col 4

Execute people's court verdict, Hasina to govt

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina has called upon the government to execute the people's verdict given in Thursday's 'Gana Adalat' (people's court). Otherwise, she warned, the ruling BNP would one day be tried by the people.

Addressing a public rally at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city Friday, the Leader of the Opposition said that the people through holding the 'Gana Adalat' had expressed their long suppressed resentment.

The Gana Adalat on Thursday gave the verdict that Golam Azam should be sentenced to death for his war crimes during the country's War of Liberation in 1971. The meeting was organised by the Awami League in connection

with celebration of the Independence Day that fell on Thursday.

'Leader of the war criminals, Golam Azam, has been tried in the people's court. The killers of Bangabandhu would also be tried similarly, if the government fails to do the same', Hasina remarked.

She reiterated her allegation that the ruling party was dillydallying in repealing the Indemnity Act hindering the move for trial of Bangabandhu's killers. 'The self-proclaimed murderers of Bangabandhu and their patrons since 1975 must face a public trial', the AL leader cautioned and expressed her determination to ensure the trial of the killers of 1971 and 1975 in this soil.

See Page 12 Col 8

Armed youths storm Sangbad office

Some armed youths stormed the daily Sangbad office in Purana Paltan Friday and assaulted its staff and damaged furniture and a telephone PABX, witnesses said, reports UNB.

Aku Kaiser, sub-editor of the Bengali daily, was seriously injured when he jumped out of the first floor of the office to escape gunshot. He was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Rickshawpuller Golap Hossain and shopkeeper Abul Hossain received bullet wounds when the unidentified gunmen opened fire while fleeing the spot.

At least four mussels were also injured near the Purana Paltan mosque where the attackers blasted crackers.

Witnesses said about 10 youngmen armed with automatic weapons suddenly attacked the Sangbad office at about 6-30 pm and abused the staff pointing guns at them.

News staff Zafar Wazed and Shantonu Kaiser were injured when they were hit by attackers with the butt of cut-rifles.

The armed hoodlums also set ablaze a car of Football Players Welfare Association parked in front of the Sangbad office and attacked the nearby Daily Samachar office.

Sangbad employees suspected the attackers to be activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and Freedom Party.

BSS adds: The leaders of BFWJ and DUJ, in a statement condemned the throwing of bombs and stones by armed persons on the Sangbad office yesterday.

They said the armed youths had carried out a planned at-

See Page 12 Col 5

Rival youths clash

Policeman killed, 50 injured in N'ganj

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Mar 27: Abdul Majed, a police constable, was killed and at least 50 others, including eight women, were injured yesterday in a clash between two rival groups of youngsters of two 'mahallas' (neighbourhoods) of Narayanganj Upazila.

Of the injured, the condition of five are stated to be critical. They were admitted to various hospitals of the dis-

trict. The clash occurred in two phases, one late Wednesday night and the other on Thursday morning.

It all started when a young female worker of a nearby garments factory, who resides in 'Purbapara', was teased by a group of youths of 'Paschimpara'. She was returning home from work late Wednesday

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