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# The Daily Star

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**NOTICE**  
 Today's *The Daily Star* contains an 8-page tabloid size 4-colour supplement on "Armed Forces Day".

**NEWS BRIEFS**

**Russian air force commander held**  
 MOSCOW, Nov 20: The commander of a Russian air force unit and his deputy were arrested and charged with embezzling state property, corruption and abuse of power, ITAR-Tass said Friday. Maj Gen Vladimir Rodionov and Col Georgy Iskov were investigated by military prosecutors for the illegal use of military planes to carry passengers and freight from Siberia to central Russia, reports AP.

**DUJ emergency meet today**  
 An emergency meeting of the Executive Committee of Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) will be held today at 11 am at the union office, a DUJ press release said. All office bearers and members of the Executive Committee including the unit chiefs have been requested to attend the meeting, reports BSS.

**56 more arrested on various charges**  
 Police rounded up 56 people from different parts of the city Friday on various charges, a DMP press release said yesterday. Of the arrested, three were wanted criminals, one on charge of murder, two for robbery and three for stealing, reports UNB.

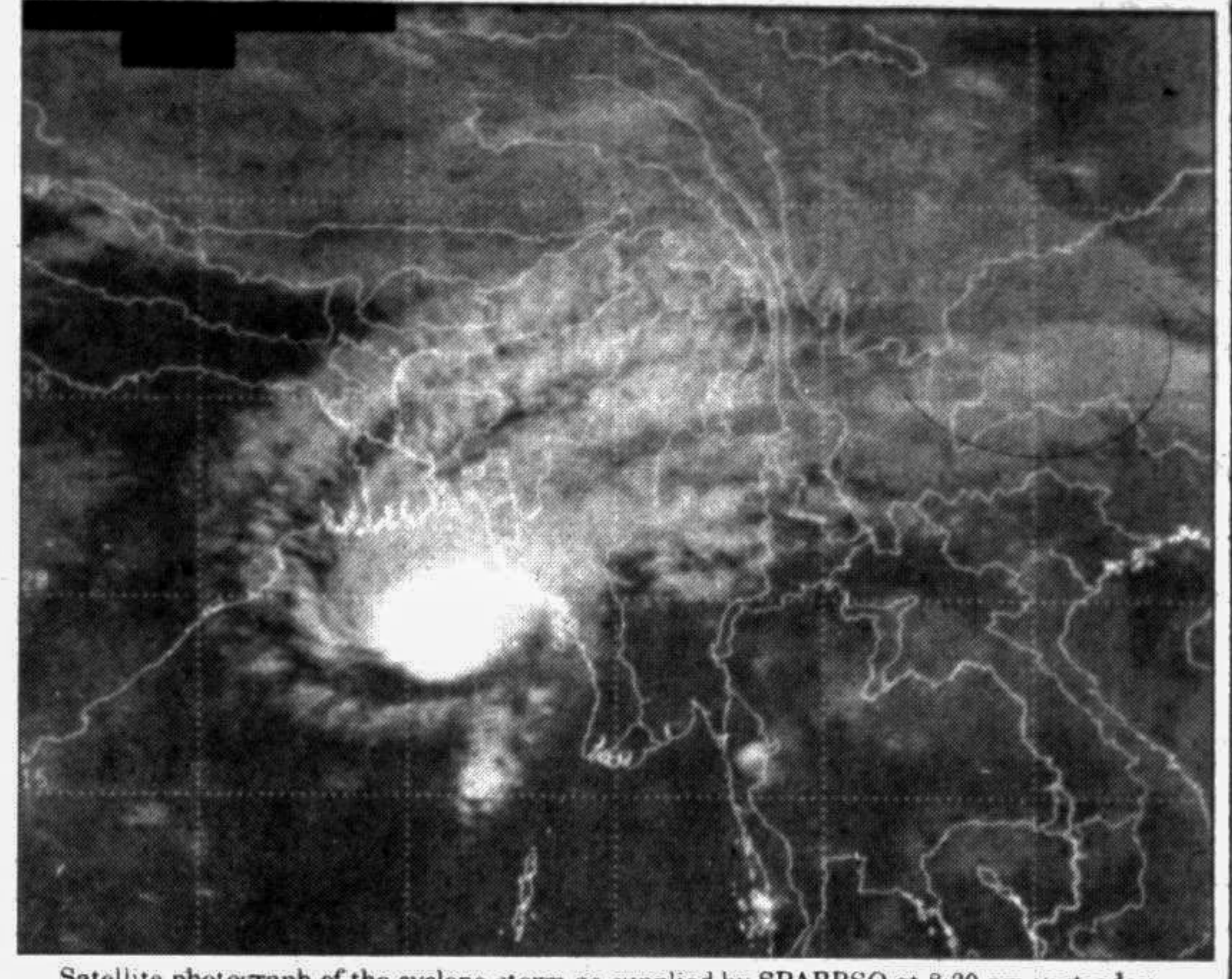
**Huda leaves for Bahrain**  
 Information Minister Barister Nazmul Huda left Dhaka yesterday evening on a five-day official visit to Bahrain at the invitation of the government of Bahrain, reports BSS.

## Cyclone may hit coast this morning

**By Staff Correspondent**  
 An uneasy calm descended on the Chittagong-Cox's Bazar coast yesterday as the severe cyclonic storm brewed in the Bay of Bengal was heading towards the shore and was likely to hit the coastline in the early morning today (Saturday).  
 According to a Storm Warning Centre bulletin issued midnight last night, the severe cyclonic storm with a core of hurricane winds over the north Bay and adjoining central Bay moved northeastwards and was centred at 11-30 pm Friday about 225 kms southwest of Cox's Bazar town.  
 It said, it is likely to intensify further and move in northeasterly direction at a speed of about 15 km per hour (kph) and may cross Chittagong-Cox's Bazar coast by early Saturday morning.  
 Peripheral gusty wind of the storm may start affecting Bangladesh coast by midnight of Friday.  
 The maximum sustained wind within 74 kms of the storm centre was about 190 kph rising to 220 kph in gusts or squalls. The sea would remain very rough.

Maritime port of Cox's Bazar was advised last night to keep hoisted Great Danger Signal Number Ten. Districts of Cox's Bazar and their off-shore islands and chars were under the same great danger signal. Districts of Chittagong, Feni, Noakhali, Laxmipur and Bhola and their off-shore islands and chars were under Great Danger Signal Number Eight.  
 The maritime port of Mongla was advised to keep hoisted Local Warning Signal Number Four.  
 The districts of Patuakhali, Barisal, Borguna, Pirojpur, Bagerhat, Khulna, Satkhira and their off-shore islands and chars were under Local Warning Signal Number Four while river ports of the districts of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Feni, Noakhali, Laxmipur and Bhola were advised to keep hoisted Riverine Great Danger Signal Number Four. Riverports of the districts of Patuakhali, Barisal, Borguna, Pirojpur, Bagerhat, Khulna, Satkhira and Comilla were also advised to keep hoisted Riverine Warning Signal Number Two.

The bulletin said, the low-lying areas of the districts of Cox's Bazar, Chittagong, Feni, Noakhali, Laxmipur and Bhola and their off-shore islands and chars were likely to be inundated by a storm surge of height 10 to 15 feet above normal astronomical tide.  
 The bulletin added that the low-lying areas of the districts of Patuakhali, Barguna, Bagerhat and Khulna and their off-shore islands and chars were likely to be inundated by a storm surge 4 to 6 feet above normal astronomical tide.  
 Tress, semi pucca and kucha houses are likely to be uprooted or damaged by gusty or squally winds.  
 All fishing boats and trawlers in north Bay have been advised to remain in safe shelter till further notice.  
 Observing the cyclone's movement which was first noticed in the Bay of Bengal on Tuesday, Director of Space Research and Remote Sensing Organisation (SPARRSO) Dr AM Chowdhury last night told The Daily Star that the cyclone remained stationary in one



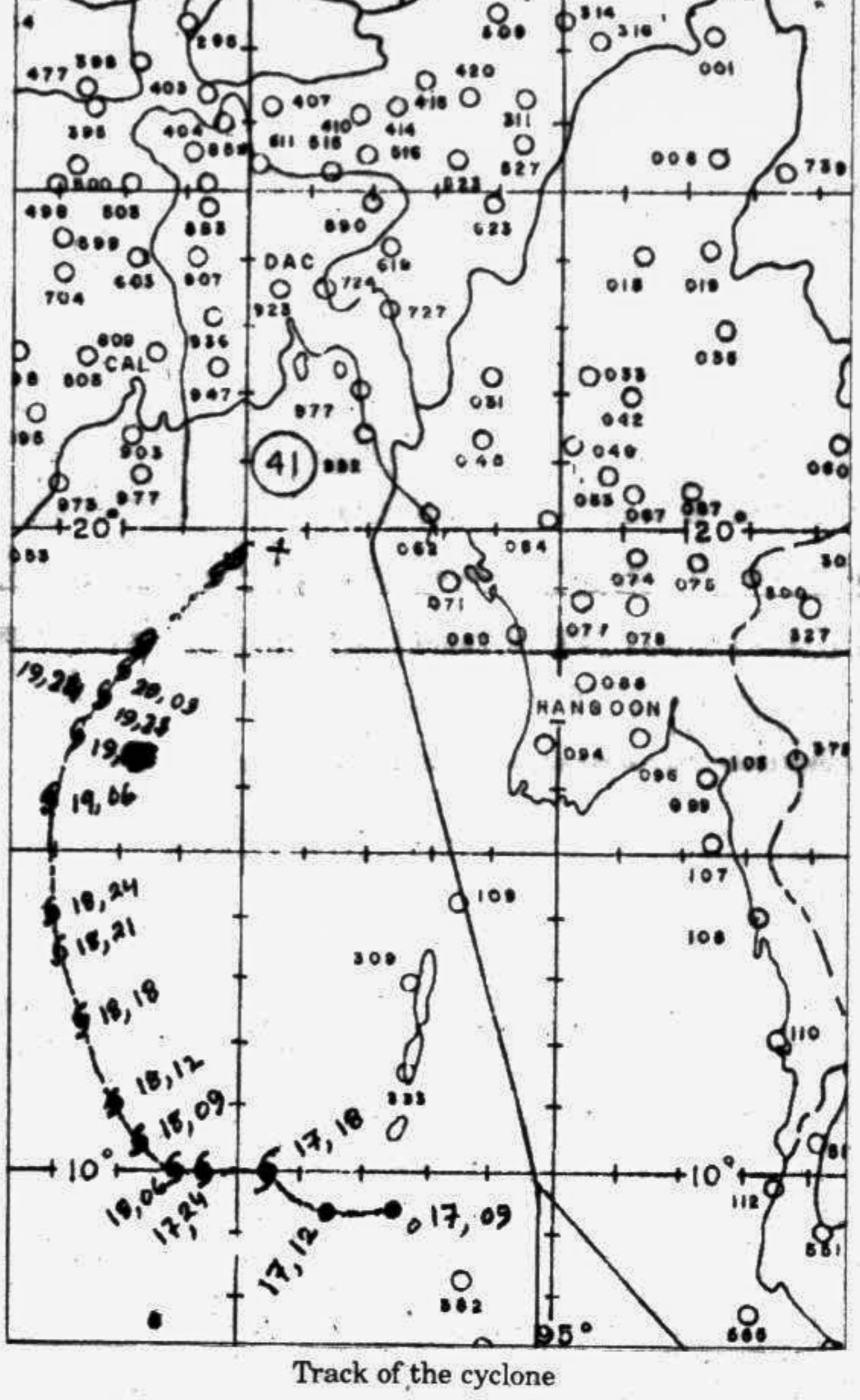
Satellite photograph of the cyclone storm as supplied by SPARRSO at 8:30 pm yesterday.

## Lakhs taken to safety

**From Staff Correspondent**  
 CHITTAGONG, Nov 20: Over six lakh people have been taken to safety today from the low-lying areas of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Noakhali districts, as part of preparedness to face the impending hurricane, officials here said.  
 Of the total, about five lakh people were shifted alone from the off-shore areas in Cox's Bazar district alone.  
 The evacuated people took refuge in different cyclone shelters, and high places including community centres, school and office buildings.  
 Bangladesh Red Crescent Society officials said that 22,000 of their volunteers were deployed at 25 coastal thanas in the southern Bangladesh to alert the people.  
 Officials here said that extensive measures had been taken to tackle the disaster.  
 Talking to The Daily Star, Additional Divisional Commissioner AK Munshi said, "we have taken all humanly possible measures as this is a peculiar type of cyclone."  
 In Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ), a large number of sandbags have been dumped around its embankments to check erosion in the face of tidal surge, officials said.  
 A round-the-clock control room has been set up at the CEPZ.  
 From the Chittagong port, all ships have been moved to

safer places while berthing of ships from the outer anchorage remained suspended.  
 All aircraft have been moved elsewhere from the Patenga airport and nearby Air Force base. Navy ships have also been removed.  
 Chittagong Airport Station Manager Mohammad Shahabuddin said all major equipment, including Ground Power Unit (GPU), and international luggages have been shifted to safer places. The incoming last flight from Dhaka was suspended.  
 An emergency meeting was held at the Deputy Commissioner's conference room this afternoon where State Minister for Textiles Abdul Mannan, City Corporation Mayor Mir Nasrullah and Divisional Commissioner Omar Faruque were present. All divisional and district level officials attended.  
 Four control rooms were opened at the offices of the Divisional Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, City Corporation and the Port Authority. Besides, separate control rooms were also opened by T&T, PWD, PDB, WASA and the Civil Surgeon's office.  
 The authorities have sanctioned 50 metric tons of rice and taka two lakh in cash to each of the six thanas of the district for emergency relief and rehabilitation as autho-

risied by the Relief Ministry today.  
 Meanwhile, a massive campaign using loudspeakers was launched and signal flags were hoisted at the coastal areas advising the people to move to safer sites.  
 Out of the four Biman flights today between Dhaka and Chittagong, the last one at 7-30 pm was cancelled.  
 Chittagong City experienced a gloomy weather with sporadic drizzles all day.  
 Tension gripped the port city where streets were almost deserted.  
 Panic buying also gripped Chittagong where people were seen rushing to markets to buy essential goods for emergency.  
 Report from our Cox's Bazar correspondent said apart from evacuating about five lakh people, the district authorities have taken up all out disaster preparations to tackle the calamity.  
 Disaster preparedness control rooms have been opened in the five thanas of the district. These are in the Sadar, Kutubdia, Moheshkhali, Chakoria and Teknaf.  
 About 3500 volunteers of Red Crescent Society under the cyclone preparedness programme (CPP) have alerted the people of all the unions of the district.  
 However, reports from Kutubdia said only about 22000



Track of the cyclone

## Cabinet reviews preparedness programme

The Cabinet held a special meeting at Bangabhaban yesterday evening with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair, reports BSS.  
 It reviewed the latest position of the arrangements made to face any eventuality in case the cyclone hits the coastal areas.  
 The Cabinet directed the ministries of Relief, Shipping, Home Affairs, Health and Family Welfare and other concerned to keep all arrangements

## Take people to safety, Hasina asks AL workers

Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed leaders and workers of her party to help in evacuating people from the vulnerable coastal areas and offshore islands to safer places in the face of impending cyclone and tidal surge.  
 The Awami League President also asked her party workers to look to the safety of their families.  
 Hasina was in constant touch with the district administration and Awami League leaders in areas likely to be affected by the cyclonic storm to monitor the latest situation, a party source told UNB last night.

## Plea for effective flood tackling plan

**NETROKONA, Nov 20:** Speakers at a seminar here today suggested for the adoption of an effective plan capable of tackling the recurrent floods and the related problems in the north eastern districts of Bangladesh removing as far as possible the usually anticipated side effects, reports BSS.  
 The seminar was organised by the Flood Plan Coordination Organisation (FPZO) of the Ministry of Irrigation to enable the people's elected representatives from the region as well as the field level officers in the concerned districts have a free exchange of views with the project consultants conducting

the surveys.  
 In all five studies are on splitting Bangladesh into as many regions which were taken following the disastrous floods of 1988 for tackling on a permanent footing the recurrent flood problem throughout the country. The North East Regional Project is part of the country wide studies for the purpose.  
 Rahima Khandker MP, Abu Abbas MP, Begum Matia Chowdhury MP, Bari Ashraf MP, Mosharraf Hossain MP, Javed Ali MP and Ataur Rahman Khan MP, called for identification of the problems for an effective solution so that

the people in the region did not suffer time and again from the disastrous floods once the proposed plan was implemented.  
 District level field officers also made similar suggestions and some of them made specific recommendations also.  
 The north eastern project region comprises the districts of Netrokona, Kishoreganj, Sherpur, Sylhet, Moulvibazar, Habiganj, Sunamganj and parts of Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Gazipur, Narsingdi and Narayanganj covering a total command area of about 35,000 square kilometres.  
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## Ruling party trying to weaken democratic forces: Hasina

**By Staff Correspondent**  
 Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday accused the ruling party of attempting to weaken the country's democratic political forces with an ill motive to cling to power.  
 "The desired result of the last anti-autocracy movement could not be achieved due to the rulers' ignorance as to how democracy is practised and nurtured," Hasina, the Awami League chief, told a citizens' meeting held to condole the death of veteran politician Syed Altaf Hossain in the capital.  
 The present government in its two-year-rule had apparently failed to devote itself for the cause of common man, she

alleged and went on, rather it had been patronising terrorism and repressing the opposition activists creating an unusual situation in the country. "Under such a situation people's sacrifices in the pro-democracy struggle seem to have been meaningless," Hasina commented.  
 Paying tributes to late Syed Altaf Hossain, the founder president of Ganatantri Party, the opposition leader said a close associate of Bangabandhu and like him Altaf Hossain's soul departed from the world bearing the pangs of not witnessing the fruits of people's movement to which he contributed a lot.

Terming today's politics as having fallen in a vicious cycle resulting in the standstill to the growth of national economy and insecurity to the public life, the AL leader strongly felt the absence of honest, dedicated and uncompromising political leadership as possessed by late Altaf.  
 Remembering her last days' dialogues with the Ganatantri Party leader, Hasina called upon all concerned to materialise the dreams of Syed Altaf and others who steered the long struggle for restoration of democracy and bring emancipation of the masses.  
 Ganatantri Party organised  
 See Page 12 Col 5

## Arabs threaten to quit Middle East peace talks

**WASHINGTON, Nov 20:** Arab negotiators Friday said they might quit the Middle East peace talks unless Israel comes to terms in the early months of the new US administration of President-elect Clinton, reports AP.  
 At a news conference, the Palestinian and Syrian negotiators said their participation in the talks was not open-ended. "Our patience cannot last forever," Muwaffiq al-Allaf, head of the Syrian delegation, said. He said Syria would return to the table next month and was willing to stay there for three or four months after Clinton

takes office Jan 20. If there is no progress by then, al-Allaf said, "it would be time to reconsider the whole thing."  
 An earlier report says: Mideast peace talks are in recess and the United States is urging Arabs and Israelis to use the time to search for ways to compromise.  
 Both sides are committed to the negotiations, now in their 13th month, Assistant Secretary of State Edward P. Djerejian said Thursday. And the United States "is in it for the long run," he said.  
 However, the US diplomat acknowledged that the latest

round produced "no headline-grabbing breakthroughs." One reason, he said, was violence in southern Lebanon, which he mostly blamed on the fundamentalist Hezbollah group and Iran, its principal sponsor.  
 "The real challenge for the parties now is to develop approaches that will enable each of them to begin meeting one another's requirements on their basic concerns," he said.  
 In trying to make headway, Arabs and Israelis approached former Secretary of State James A Baker III and suggested he resume his Mideast shuttle diplomacy, but he con-

cluded the timing was not right, aides to Baker said Thursday.  
 Baker has kept his distance from the slow-moving negotiations since resigning in August to help run President Bush's re-election campaign. The talks are bogged down in disagreement over the Israeli-occupied territories and the kind of peace Arabs would exchange for land.  
 Also, Israel and the Palestinians are unable to agree on a formula to extend limited self-rule to Palestinians who live under Israeli control on the West Bank and in Gaza.

Baker set up the talks last year, travelling to the Mideast after the defeat of Iraq in the Gulf War.  
 Baker aides, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Arab and Israeli governments inquired after the Nov 3 US election whether Baker would resume his diplomacy.  
 They were told Baker was prepared to go back only if the two sides narrowed their differences during the round of talks that wound up Thursday.  
 Acting Secretary of State Lawrence S Eagleburger publicly endorsed the idea. And

President-elect Clinton said last week that if Baker resumed his shuttle diplomacy, "I would support it."  
 Djerejian, at a news conference, said no decision had been made on Baker's involvement. He said it would be up to Bush to decide.  
 "I think it would be premature to conclude this option has been decided or that it has been actively considered at this point," he said.  
 Yossi Gal, spokesman for the Israeli delegation, said, "We have not heard of a mission by Baker in the region."

## Armed Forces Day today

The Armed Forces Day will be observed today with due solemnity and enthusiasm, an ISPR press release said in Dhaka yesterday, reports BSS.  
 The day's programme begins in the capital city with the laying of floral wreath at the 'Shikha Anirban,' (the eternal flame), at the Dhaka Cantonment in the morning.  
 President and Supreme Commander of the armed forces Abdur Rahman Biswas, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, who is also in charge of the ministry of Defence, Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan, Chief of Naval Staff Rear Admiral Mohammad Mohaiminul Islam and Chief of Air Staff Air Vice-Marshal Altaf Hossain Choudhury will place wreaths at the Shikha Anirban to pay homage to the members of the armed forces who had embraced martyrdom in the War of Liberation in 1971.  
 A reception to the next kin of Shaheed Captain Mohiuddin Zahangir, Bir Shrestho, Shaheed Sepoy Md Mostafa Kamal, Bir Shrestho, Md Shaheed Sepoy Hamidur Rahman, Bir Shrestho, will be

See Page 12 Col 3

## Members of Armed Forces to uphold glory, hopes Biswas

President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday expressed the hope that the members of Armed Forces would uphold their glory and image through continued discharge of their responsibility with sincerity and dedication, reports BSS.  
 In a message on the eve of the Armed Forces Day, the President said Bangladesh Armed Forces had started their formal journey on this day during the War of Liberation.  
 He said the members of the Armed Forces in collaboration with the people established independence and sovereignty of the country after great many sacrifices.

## Khaleda, Hasina pay tributes to members of Armed Forces

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday paid glorious tributes to the members of the Armed Forces on the occasion of the Armed Forces Day in separate messages, reports UNB.  
 Begum Khaleda Zia sought divine blessings for our patriotic armed forces to enable them to safeguard the country's independence and

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## Indo-Bangla water talks end without accord

**NEW DELHI, Nov 20:** The first meeting of the Joint Committee of Experts (JCE) of India and Bangladesh on sharing of river waters concluded here today with both sides agreeing to meet shortly in Dhaka, reports PTI.  
 Official sources said that the talks were held in a cordial atmosphere and both sides agreed to continue the dialogue.  
 While the high level Indian delegation was led by the Union Water Resources Secretary, Dr C D Thatte, the Bangladesh team was headed by M Asafuddin, Secretary, Ministry of Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control.  
 See Page 12 Col 4

## Rice, paddy procurement prices lower than last yr's

**By S Y Bakht**  
 The recently announced government procurement prices for paddy and rice are lower by Taka 94 and Taka 144 per quintal respectively compared with that for the same period last year.  
 According to the summary of the World Food Programme (WFP) November issue of 'Bangladesh foodgrain forecast' figures, the current Aman procurement price is even lower.  
 See Page 12 Col 6