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50 hurt as storms lash 4 districts

By Staff Correspondent

At least 50 persons were injured as storms lashed Manikganj, Jamalpur, Sherpur and Netrokona districts Thursday night.

In Manikganj, at least eight people were feared missing since boat capsized and 10 others injured when a storm lashed the district Thursday night.

BIWTA sources at Aricha ghat said five fishermen had been missing since five fishing boats were overturned in the Padma near Daulatdia ghat by the early nor-wester of the season at about 10 pm.

Three other people were also missing after a Nagarbari-bound ferry boat from Aricha sank in river Jamuna near Charnoti.

The missing people could not be traced till Friday afternoon, according to UNB.

UP Chairmen of Shibaboy and Teota said 10 people were injured in roof collapse while the storm, accompanied by heavy showers, battered more than a hundred katcha houses.

The worst-affected are Shibaboy, Harirampur, Daulatpur and sadar thana areas.

Another report says, a severe storm lashed two thanas of Jamalpur district injuring some 30 people on Thursday evening.

The storm, which lasted for

about 10 minutes, also damaged three BDR barracks, a few semi-pucca buildings, more than 5,000 thatched houses and winter crops like wheat and pepper in Melandah and Sadar thanas, including the municipal area.

Telephone lines were also snapped by the storm but restored after nearly 16 hours.

Rail communication between Jamalpur and Dhaka was disrupted when a sugarcane-loaded train fell off the track at Mirpur railway station.

According to information available here the worst-affected thana is Jamalpur-sadar whose Itail, Norandy, Ranagacha, Sarifpur, Lauxmichar, Mefta and Kendua unions got badly hit.

Aftabuzzaman (40) and his minor son Sajib were admitted to Jamalpur Hospital with injuries caused due to house collapse, hospital sources said.

Early nor-wester also hit sadar thana of Sherpur district Thursday night causing widespread damage to winter crops, and uprooting many trees.

The storm which passed through the area around 8 pm Thursday damaged some 100 thatched houses.

Satpaitta and Kulurechar unions under sadar thana were badly affected. House of one

Hashem Ali in Satpaitta union was gutted during the cyclone.

Cyclone and hailstorm have seriously affected standing wheat, betel leaf yard and rohi crops of the districts.

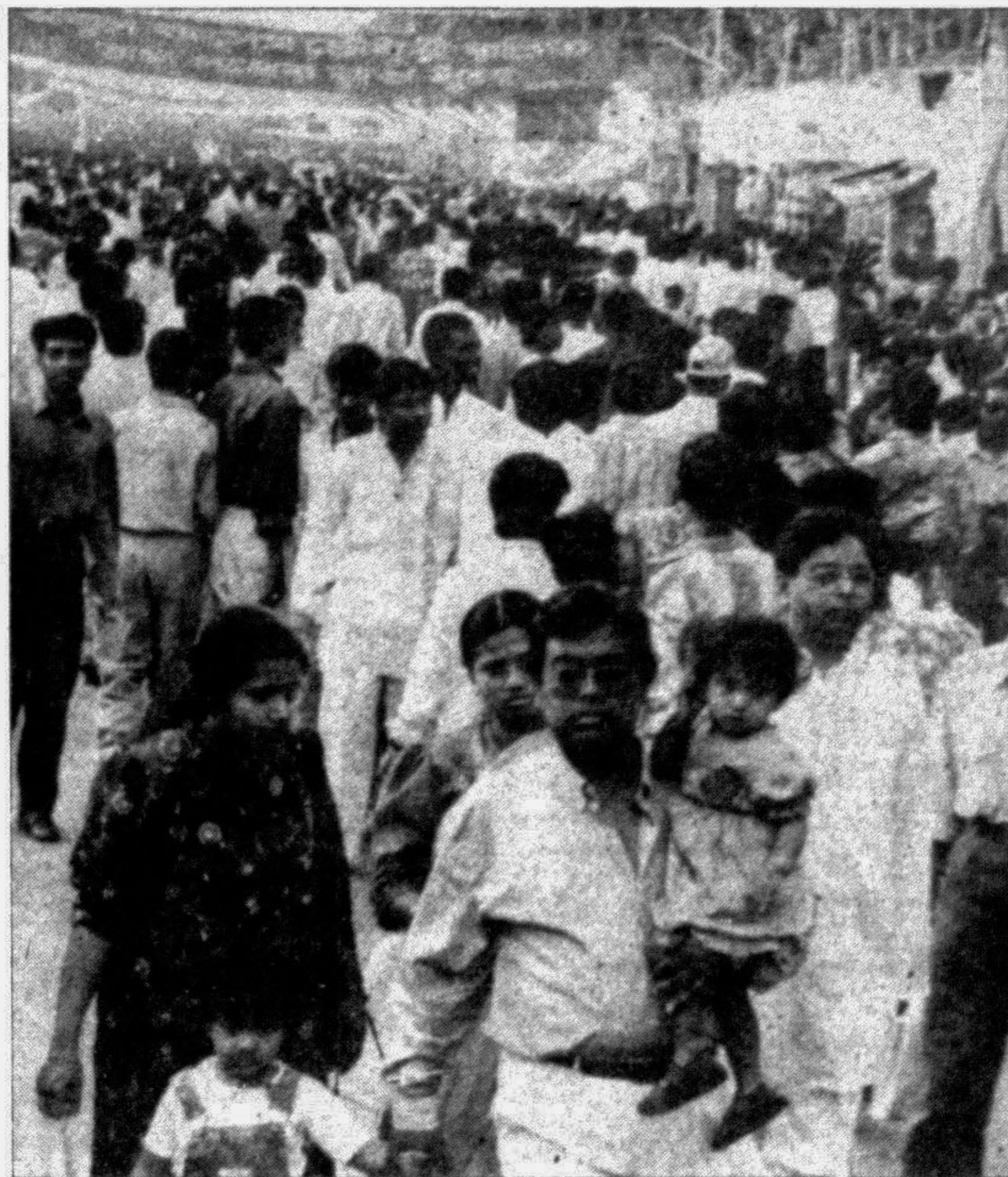
Power supply in the districts was disrupted as lines were snapped due to cyclonic storm.

BSS adds: A severe nor-wester swept over Netrokona town and its adjoining villages Thursday night leaving a trail of destruction including razing dwelling houses, disrupting electric lines and uprooting trees.

At least two persons—an eight-year girl and an old woman—were injured due to house collapse at the village Dugla during the storm which lasted 30 minutes with a speed of about 90 kilometer per hour.

The district town remained without power for 17 hours till 3 pm yesterday when the electricity was restored, local PWD sources said, adding dozens of electric poles were uprooted during the storm.

A paddy godown and a pharmacy shop were destroyed by the storm in the town's Malni and Kalli areas. Deopur and Shibrasadpur are the other two villages lashed by the storm.



A large number of people visited the Book Fair at Bangla Academy yesterday. — Star photo

Ekushey '93

Most travel stories are exaggerated

By Staff Correspondent

Writers of travel stories tend to exaggerate their experiences in foreign countries which undermines the credibility of the authors.

Prof Manjural Islam said this in his keynote paper presented at a discussion meeting on 'Literature of Bangladesh: Travel Stories' yesterday at Bangla Academy.

The discussion presided over by Professor Kabir Chowdhury was participated by Prof Razia Khan Amin, Tofazzal Hossain and Abul Fazel Shamsuddin as speakers.

The speakers said that the travel stories should focus on the historic perspective of a place and it should be written in a lucid language in a light manner.

The programme was followed by a dance drama.

The Bangla Academy book fair yesterday attracted probably its highest number of visitor this year so far. The crowd extended from the Doyel Chattar to the TSC crossing while the area was vibrant with different types of Bengali music played from tape recorders of the stalls.

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PM asks DCCI leaders Speak out against hartals

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday sought the cooperation of businessmen and industrialists to help the government in vitalising the country's economy, reports BSS.

The call was given when a group of leaders of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industries (DCCI) led by its President M Yunus met the Prime Minister at Sugandha here last night to exchange views on prevailing economic situation.

The DCCI leaders had exchange of views with Begum Zia on the situation in banking sector, tax policy, labour policy, labour unrest and law and

order situation. The DCCI leaders said that investment and production in mills and factories were suffering following repeated labour movement, siege, strike and hartal programmes.

In this context, Begum Zia urged the DCCI leaders that it was also their responsibility to convince those who were giving such programmes to avoid programmes of hartal and siege. She said it was also their duty to speak out against such programmes.

During the exchange of views with the DCCI leaders, Begum Zia said it was also the responsibility of the businessmen and industrialists to cre-

ate employment opportunities for the vast number of unemployed people. She said there are quarters who would not like to see the country to develop as that would hamper their interests. She said we have to uphold the national interest and move ahead accordingly.

Begum Zia said the mentality of a section of businessmen to become rich overnight has to be changed. She said our educated children cannot remain unemployed.

She said it was a responsibility of all to 'work like a team' for increasing investment and generate employment. — See Page 12 Col 6

Dr Kamal, others meet to launch new party

By Staff Correspondent

A national convention to launch a new political party will be held sometime in May in Dhaka.

According to reliable sources, the decision to hold the convention was taken at an informal meeting of over 50 politicians from different organisations yesterday.

The meeting, held at a house at Gulshan, was organised at the initiative of Bangladesh Democratic Forum (BDF). The forum's convenor Dr Kamal Hossain presided over the meeting which reviewed the political situation in the country and came to a

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BJP preparing for another showdown

NEW DELHI, Feb 19: A Hindu-revivalist party forged ahead Thursday with plans to bring hundreds of thousands of supporters here next week, during the Indian government to stop them from joining a banned rally in the city, reports AFP.

Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao's government reiterated it would at all cost prevent the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) from violating a three-month ban on processions and rallies in the national capital.

We are ready, said BJP (Indian people's party) vice president K R Malkani amid

fears that a showdown between the government and India's largest opposition party was approaching a flashpoint.

Taunting the government to react, the BJP said it would paste posters all over the country and string up the party's saffron-coloured flags over the Boat Club lawns, the venue for the February 25 rally which is billed to draw 1.5 million people.

Let them try and stop us, Malkani added.

Government workers were putting up steel barricades on the sprawling Boat Club lawns as a precaution, as Home — See Page 12 Col 4

Form tribunal by Mar 26 to try Azam: Nirmul body

By Staff Correspondent

The Ekattorer Ghatok Dal Nirmul Samannaya Committee yesterday asked the government to constitute special tribunal by March 26 to try

Gulam Azam as 'war criminal'. If the government fails to meet the deadline, the committee would stage a sit-in demonstration in front of the secretariat on April 20, according to a resolution adopted in the committee's

National Representatives' Council held at the TSC auditorium of the Dhaka University yesterday.

The resolution further, said from May 4 each and every public appearance of the Prime — See Page 12 Col 6



Dr Milon Shishu Kishore Sangsad arranged a painting competition in Shishu Academy compound in city yesterday. — Star photo

BCL activist stabbed to death

By DMCH Correspondent

An activist of Awami League-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) was stabbed to death near Kapasia Degree College in Gazipur at around 9:30 am Friday.

Zahidul Huq Biplob, 20, a student of B Com third year of the college, was held by some armed men who stabbed him to death while he was going to college.

BCL leaders of Kapasia Degree College alleged that activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) killed Biplob.

Biplob was rushed to the PG Hospital in the capital where doctors declared him dead.

In another incident, one Harisuddin Mondol, 55, was stabbed and robbed of Taka 35,000 at Mirpur, Section-1, in the Dhaka city Friday.

Harisuddin, a driver of Ghorashal Power Station, was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with six stab injuries on his legs, hands and abdomen.

BNP govt has failed to rule country: Hasina

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the BNP government has failed to govern the country and proved its weakness and inefficiency in domestic political and economic sectors as well as external affairs, reports UNB.

"BNP is a government of promise-breakers, a government of betrayers. They are ruling the country following the style of autocratic Ershad", she said.

The Awami League President was addressing a group of students of Hasanpur Shaheed Nazrul Govt College of Daudkandi and Munshi Fazlur Rahman Govt College of Gouripur, who met her at 29 Minto Road this afternoon.

Hasina said the post-75 governments had failed to do any welfare to the common people. On the contrary, national economy was destroyed making the country a beggars' nation.

After independence of the country, government of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman rebuilt the war-ravaged

nation and announced economic programmes to ensure basic needs of the people.

But, Hasina said, defeated forces of 1971 assassinated Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib when he declared the economic programmes to make the country self-reliant.

Referring to unrest and armed conflicts on the campus, she expressed her grave concern at the future of higher education and asked the students community to rally round the Chhatra League to eliminate terrorism and build up a democratic society free from economic exploitation.

Hasina blamed the Prime Minister and the Home Minister for the tragic incident in Rajshahi University on February 6 when at least five students were killed allegedly by Islami Chhatra Shibir.

"BNP does not say anything against Jamaat as it assumed power with its support... BNP will not hesitate to do any damage to the nation to stay in power."

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Pak SC bows to parliamentary pressure

ISLAMABAD, Feb 19: Pakistan's Supreme Court bowed to parliamentary pressure today and lifted a gag order it imposed five days earlier on free reporting of a controversy that has rocked the judiciary, reports Reuter.

Chief Justice Mohammad Afzal Zullah said he lifted the ban in response to a request from Law and Justice Minister Abdul Ghafoor 'without in any way taking it as a control or command'.

On Sunday, the Supreme Court banned reports and comments about a statement by former army chief General Mirza Aslam Beg after it summoned him to attend proceedings on February 20 to decide whether he is to be charged with contempt of court.

"I hereby acknowledge the suggestion and assurance of the National Assembly in the above matter and accept the same," the Chief Justice said in his three-page statement.

Deputies to the National Assembly (lower house) were unanimous on Wednesday in — See Page 12 Col 7

Expel Myanmar from UN, Nobel laureates demand

CHIANG MAI, (Thailand), Feb 19: The Nobel Peace laureates' mission seeking the release of pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi called today for Myanmar's expulsion from the United Nations and an immediate embargo on arms sales to the country, reports AFP.

It also advocated an economic boycott of the South East Asian nation. The seven Nobel laureates said they had defined two objectives to be met before an ousted Myanmar would be readmitted into the world body.

The first was that the military junta, officially known as the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), 'immediately and unconditionally release our sister laureate Aung San Suu Kyi'.

Suu Kyi, the daughter of Aung San, Myanmar's independence hero, has been held under house arrest in Yangon since July 1989. She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991.

The second objective, the laureates said at a press conference in this northern Thai city, was that the SLORC 'accepts the results of the

election of 1990 and begin an immediate dialogue with the democratically elected leadership of Myanmar... this dialogue must involve Aung San Suu Kyi'.

Despite Suu Kyi's imprisonment, her National League for Democracy swept the 1990 polls but Myanmar's ruling generals refused to relinquish power and intensified their suppression of pro-democracy activists.

The Nobel laureates said the SLORC had failed to acknowledge or act in response to concerns and recommendations cited in previous UN

recommendations on Myanmar, thereby justifying the country's expulsion.

The laureates, including former Costa Rican President Oscar Arias and South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, also called on the United Nations to impose an immediate and effective arms embargo on Myanmar.

"Of particular concern is the sale last year of 1.2 billion dollars worth of arms by the People's Republic of China," they said.

The mission said the United Nations and the international community should

"cooperate in the application of a comprehensive economic boycott including trade and investment sanctions."

It also encouraged democratic governments to 'provide humanitarian and political assistance to democratic movements opposed to the SLORC.'

And it made a special plea to Yangon's neighbours in South East Asia 'to use their significant influence to encourage the SLORC to restore democracy to the people of Myanmar' while urging that 'all bilateral and multilateral assistance to the SLORC be for

humanitarian purposes only.' The recommendation capped an unprecedented crusade by the Nobel laureates to seek Suu Kyi's release. The group, which also includes the London-based rights organisation Amnesty International, is scheduled to testify before the UN human rights commission in Geneva later this month.

All of the Nobel winners said they had been deeply moved by their visit Thursday to two Myanmar refugee camps on the Thai side of the Thai-Myanmar frontier.

The laureates were clearly — See Page 12 Col 8

Armedmen loot 3 textile fair stalls

By Staff Correspondent

A group of armedmen stormed into three stalls in the Textile Fair at Agargaon and looted cash and other goods last night.

Armedmen stormed into the stalls or Perag Socks, Eastern Fabrics and Sohayok, an NGO during heavy showers and looted cash and other goods at around 9.15 pm Friday.

A case was lodged with Tejgaon police. But no further details of the incident was available until filing of this report last night.