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# The Daily Star

**NIRMAN TILES**

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**NEWS BRIEFS**

**10 hurt as BNP, AL clash**

LALMONIRHAT, Oct 18: At least 10 people, including two cops, were injured as activists of ruling BNP and opposition Awami League clashed in the town today. Of the injured, Afzal Hossain, a local BNP leader, was admitted to the Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital in critical condition. Witnesses said the clash ensued when a procession of the AL protesting the killing of its activist Anisur Rahman Bhehu Miah confronted a counter procession brought out by the BNP, reports UNB.

**Diarrhoea claims 11 in Bogra**

BOGRA, Oct 18: Diarrhoea has taken an epidemic form in the Dhunat thana where at least 11 people died during the last 17 days, the Civil Surgeon said. Unofficial sources put the death toll at 27 out of about 2,000 people attacked by the water borne disease, reports UNB.

**707 Rohingyas repatriated**

From Our Correspondent COX'S BAZAR, Oct 18: Another 707 Rohingyas from 169 families left for Myanmar this morning. With the new returns the total number of Rohingyas returned to their home comes to 42,213.

## 3 killed, 30 hurt as gunmen attack CMCH cafeteria

CHITTAGONG, Oct 18: A group of gunmen killed three persons, one of them a doctor, and injured 30 others during a 'commando-style' raid on the doctors' cafeteria at the Chittagong Medical College Hospital this afternoon, police and witnesses said.

The assailants sprayed the canteen with bullets from automatic weapons.

The dead included Dr Mizanur Rahman, 26, Borhan Uddin, 24, a final year student of Chittagong University and Faridul Islam, 20, an outsider.

Of the injured, 11 persons with serious bullet wounds were admitted to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital for treatment while the rest were released after first aid, doctors said.

The critically injured were Dr Khorshed Jamil, General Secretary of the Bangladesh Medical Association, Dr Omar Faruk, Sekander Hyat Khan, president of the JCD unit at the Chittagong Medical College, medical students Shahidul

received bullet wounds. But in the attack, one doctor and two visitors inside the cafeteria instantly succumbed to injuries, they added.

The assailants fled the spot immediately after the attack, they also added.

During the raid other visitors and staff of the hospital were seen running for safety.

Meanwhile, leaders of the pro-BNP students' wing JCD unit here blamed the activists of the pro-Awami League Chhatra League for the attack.

The leaders of the Islami Chhatra Shibir here identified the dead Dr Mizanur Rahman as their supporter and blamed the Chhatra League for the raid. But the Chhatra League denied its involvement. Leaders of both the JCD and the ICS demanded immediate arrest of the assailants.

The supporters of the ICS also brought out a procession in the city in protest against the attack.

However, tension gripped the port city after the incident. A case was filed with Panchlaish thana.

From Staff Correspondent

During this correspondent's visit to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital after the occurrence the whole campus was found cordoned off by police amid a tense situation.

Police officials and political sources attributed the attack to rivalry between two student groups of the Chittagong Medical College.

## Ruling party sponsoring terrorism: Hasina

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday accused the government of unleashing state-terrorism against its political opponents and called the ruling BNP to refrain from such practices for the sake of democracy.

Hasina, while addressing a press conference at her official Minto Road residence alleged that local police and BNP activists had recently made a joint armed attack on an Awami League (AL) rally at Lalmonirhat which left one Anisur Rahman, a party activist, dead on October 13.

Hasina, also the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, claimed government sponsored police atrocities against the citizens had clearly exposed the autocratic attitude of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

The AL chief called for country-wide demonstrations on October 25 to protest the killing of Anisur Rahman.

When asked whether her party would demand mid-term elections especially when she herself had been accusing the government of being autocratic, Hasina said: "We would rather call upon the government to restrain its tendency of unleashing terrorism against the people."

The AL chief, however, said her party would continue to resist the government's autocratic behaviour in a democratic manner.

"We cannot predict whether the government would be able to withstand the people's wrath," Hasina told newsmen, claiming that the people were totally fed up with the 'misrule and corrupt practices' of the BNP.

Replying to a query, the AL chief informed reporters that her party was yet to officially decide whether to demand the next parliamentary polls under a care-taker government. She, however, said no future elections under the BNP would be fair and free.

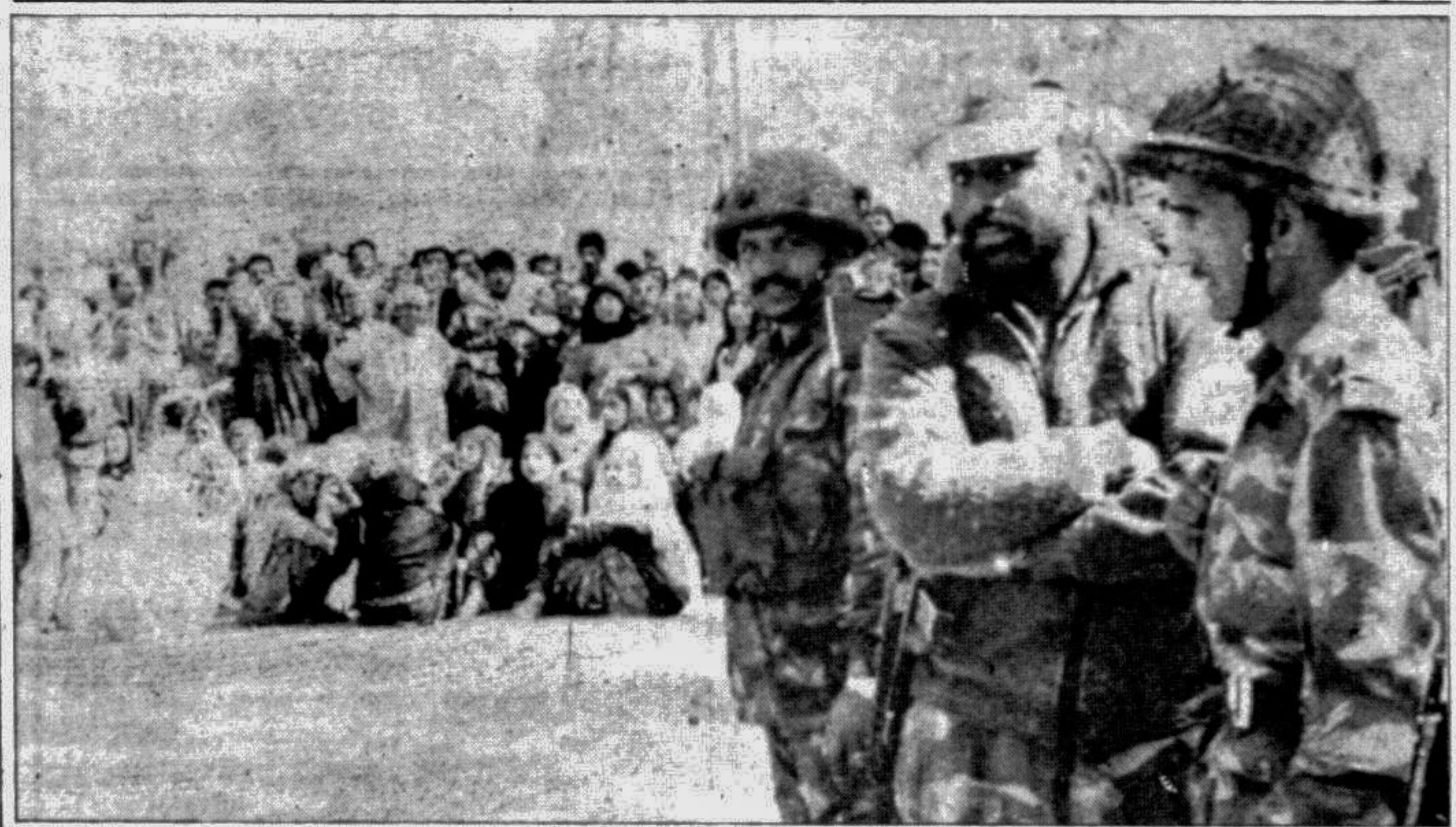
"The BNP has developed a tendency of manipulating elections — be it a college union voting or a union council poll," Hasina observed.

When asked to comment on the role of the Election Commission, the AL chief said: "Its role is not beyond doubt; it needs to be more neutral."

Turning once again to the role of the BNP, Sheikh Hasina said the government had started denying the people's constitutional right to hold rallies and bring out processions by 'deliberately' promulgating Section 144 at meeting venues



Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina addressing a press conference at her Minto Road residence in the city yesterday. — Star photo



Armies standing before people during an evacuation operation from their homes near the besieged Hazratbal Mosque in Srinagar, Kashmir, Sunday. — AFP photo

## Talks to end siege of Hazratbal Mosque deadlocked Kashmiri leaders threaten mass march

SRINAGAR, Oct 18: Negotiations were deadlocked Monday to end a siege by the Indian army on separatist militants holding Kashmir's holiest Muslim shrine, and Kashmiri leaders vowed to march on the building if the army didn't leave, report AP, AFP.

Meanwhile, the army moved light artillery rocket launchers and mortars to near the Hazratbal Shrine gates today and fanned out in surrounding areas after an abortive overnight rocket attack, Corps commander S Padmanandan said.

More soldiers joined the estimated 10,000 army and paramilitary troops deployed around the shrine to which electricity

and water supplies were cut off. Troops moved closer to the complex and it was ringed with barbed wire.

"There are no escape routes for the militants," Padmanandan said, while ruling out a storming operation. "We have enough patience to wait until better sense prevails on them and they surrender."

Security forces fired tear gas and live ammunition to break up demonstrations that flared sporadically to protest the siege of the Shrine, which reputedly contains a hair from the Prophet Mohammed.

At least a half dozen militants and scores of civilians were inside the shrine, a white

domed marble building on the shore of a placid mountain lake. Indian officials claimed up to 60 militants could be inside, and that the civilians were being held against their will. "I am sure that there will be a peaceful solution," said the chief Indian negotiator, Wajahat Habibullah after meetings with a masked militant leader.

The Indian government chose the parents of three prominent militant leaders to negotiate an end to the impasse. They included the fathers of Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front leaders Abdul Hamid and Ashfaq Majid Wani, both of whom have been killed by security forces.

Neither side offered any compromise in their positions in the three meetings on Monday, one of the negotiators told the Associated Press.

"We know what they want. They know what we want," said Habibullah, a Divisional Commissioner of Kashmir. "Basically, they have to decide."

He said the militants had made no request for food or water.

Meanwhile, at least 23 suspected militants were killed by security forces in gun battles statewide on Monday, police said. Srinagar, Kashmir's summer capital was among the many areas placed under curfew.

## CHOGM begins Thursday Khaleda leaves for Cyprus today

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia leaves this morning for Nicosia at the head of the Bangladesh delegation to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) beginning Thursday in the capital of Cyprus, reports UNB.

Her entourage includes Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman, MPs M Abdul Ghani and Begum Halima Khatun, Editor of the Dainik Bangla Ahmed Humayun, Editor of the Dainik Inqilab A M M Bahauddin, Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman, Secretary to the PM Kamal Uddin Siddiqui and Press Secretary to the PM Mozammel Haque. Niloy Rahman, who stood first in the combined merit list in this year's SSC examinations under

## Body of S M Ali arrives today

By Staff Correspondent

The mortal remains of Syed Mohammad Ali, founder-Editor of The Daily Star, is expected to arrive in the capital today from Bangkok at 12:50 pm by a Thai International flight.

He will be buried at the Banani graveyard after the Maghrib prayers.

On arrival, the body will be taken to his Old DOHS residence at Road-6, House-80.

The namaz-e-janaza will be held at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque after the Asr prayers at around 4:15 pm and later at the Jatiya Press Club at 4:45 pm.

The body of S M Ali will be brought to The Daily Star office at House-11, Road-3, Dhanmondi and will remain there for sometime.

Later, it will be taken to the Banani graveyard.

A ritual maqbil was held at The Daily Star office yesterday evening in which journalists, officials and employees, and the

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## News Analysis

### Quicker privatisation is a strategic need

By a Special Correspondent

Enterprises identified by the government in 1991 for privatisation continue to remain in the public sector because the basic question of what to do with their outstanding debts is yet to be addressed. As revealed to The Daily Star recently, officials are now seeking a political decision about whether past debt of enterprises marked for privatisation can be written off.

In terms of share in the GDP (3.6 per cent in 1992) non-financial public enterprises do not have a very large presence in the economy. But, they occupy a commanding height: Public enterprises dominate sectors that allow scale economy, use modern technology, have high capital intensity and have important forward and backward linkages.

Public enterprises have also been a major budgetary headache and are direct contributors to the fragility of the country's financial system. During the Eighties the government had to provide them between Tk 500 crore and Tk 770 crore annually out of the budget as equity infusion. Plus, the nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) had to plug the public enterprises' financing deficits of Tk 400-500 crore per annum. The consequent detrimental effect on the financial standing of the NCBs is still being corrected through issuance of recapitalisation bonds by the government.

The urgency linked with privatisation at present is qualitatively different from what it was at the turn of the Eighties. In 1991, when the plan for privatisation of 42 public enterprises were announced, the domestic resource availability position was tight. The simultaneous introduction of VAT eased this constraint in the subsequent periods. Thus, the government's success in mobilising higher amounts of domestic resources eased the urgency of privatisation from a budgetary standpoint.

The present urgency relating to privatisation is linked to its strategic role in promoting private sector-led industrial development in the country. Quicker privatisation will be the most convincing testimony of the government's commitment to private sector development. It will also send a 'sink or swim' message to the

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## Condolences

By Staff Correspondent

A steady stream of people came to The Daily Star office yesterday to offer their condolences and to sign the condolence register opened to mourn the death of S M Ali, the founding editor and publisher of the newspaper.

All expired due to kidney failure in a Bangkok hospital Sunday morning.

People from all walks of life came to sign the condolence register, which remained open from 10 am to 10 pm, and included parliamentarians, diplomats, journalists, academicians, professionals and readers of the newspaper.

Among the parliamentarians and political leaders who came to sign the condolence register, were Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Abdus Samad Azad, Abul Hasan Choudhury, MP, Awami League leader Amir Hossain and Ganatantri Party leader Suranjit Sengupta, MP.

The High Commissioner of Malaysia Ahmed Puzi Abdul Razak, the Ambassador of Turkey Kutlu Ogunven, Charge d'Affaires of Bhutan Pema Choden, Deputy High Commissioner of India Amitava Tripathy and the First Secretary of the Japanese Embassy Masayuki Makiya were among the diplomats who came to offer their condolences.

K O Mustafa and Altamash

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## 2 foreign cos may agree to explore oil, gas

By Sharier Khan

Representatives of two foreign companies, who are already in the capital, are likely to come to a joint agreement with the Bangladesh government within the next few days to search for new gas and oilfields in the coastal regions of the country, Energy Ministry sources said.

The Cairn Energy, Pfc of Scotland and Holland Sea Search of the Netherlands earlier jointly signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the government and their experts have also visited Bangladesh several times showing keen interest to explore for oil and gas in Bangladesh.

The Energy Ministry sources said the foreign companies had not yet disclosed the amount of financial involvement in the proposed exploration.

Sources said, these companies would explore in the Bay of Bengal around the Cox's Bazar-Sandwip region. They have reportedly expressed a readiness to start exploration within January next.

Another well-known French firm, Total Exploration Production, has also shown interest. The company has already procured relevant data from the government worth one lakh US dollars and its executives are expected here within the next few days to review the prospects, the sources informed.

In mid-September, Bangladesh signed five MOUs with six foreign companies, including the aforementioned ones, in a round table arranged by the Energy Minister in Texas, USA. The three other companies are United Meridian International Corp (USA), Mckanzic International (USA) and the Occidental International E and P Co (USA).

Sources said, two out of the three US companies would visit

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## India expels 4 Pak diplomats

NEW DELHI, Oct 18: The Indian Foreign Office Monday expelled four Pakistani diplomats, charging them with spying, officials said, reports AP.

"The embassy staff were being expelled for activities incompatible to their diplomatic status as representatives of a country," said India's foreign office spokesman Shiv Shanker Mukherjee.

The diplomats, who were asked to leave India within two weeks, included Shahabzada Khan, the Pakistani vice-consul in the western city of Bombay, M Sanullah, a first secretary in the New Delhi embassy, and two other junior diplomats, Riaz Hussain and Nissar Ahmed, Mukherjee said.

Predominantly Hindu India and Islamic Pakistan often accuse each other's diplomats of spying and send them home. In July, Indian police arrested a Pakistani embassy employee and accused him of stealing military secrets.

The expulsions mark a worsening of ties between the two south Asian arch enemies, who have rival claims over the northern Indian state of Kashmir.

## Pak NA elects Prime Minister today

ISLAMABAD, Oct 18: Three fringe groups in the Pakistani Parliament announced their support today for former premier Benazir Bhutto a day before the election of the country's next Prime Minister, report AFP, Reuters.

The Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP) and two factions of the Baluchistan National Movement (BNM), have four seats in the 217-member National Assembly which will choose a Prime Minister Tuesday.

JWP chief Nawab Akber Bugti, a Baluchi nationalist and feudal lord, and BNM leaders announced the alliance with Bhutto's Party at a news conference.

Meanwhile, arch rivals Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif field nomination papers today for the Prime Minister's job to be settled in a parliamentary vote tomorrow.

Six nominations each were filed for both the former Prime Ministers, National Assembly sources said.

The National Assembly elected Bhutto's nominees for Speaker and Deputy Speaker on Sunday, virtually ensuring her Pakistan People's Party (PPP) will take power despite a hung parliament.

But Sharif refused to leave the field open for an easy win for Bhutto.

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## RUTA observes strike protesting police action

RAJSHAHI, Oct 18: Teachers of the Rajshahi University today observed a strike protesting Sunday's police lathicharge on a mourning procession on the campus and arrest of five student leaders, reports UNB.

No classes were held during the strike and the teachers also abstained from their duties.

The Rajshahi University Teacher's Association (RUTA) called the strike against the police action which left at least 15 students injured.

The RUTA's decision to observe strike was taken at an emergency meeting on Sunday night.