

Minimum wages

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agitating under the leadership of the Sramik Kaarmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP) and other labour federations, conceded to the demand for increased minimum wages.

About 1.50.000 workers of the industrial units under six corporations will get the benefit of the new wage structure. The corporations are: Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC), Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC), Bangladesh Steel and Engineering Corporation (BSEC), Bangladesh Sugar and Food Industries Corporation (BSFIC), Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) and Bangladesh Forest Industries Development Corporation (BFIDC).

An official estimate shows that to pay the new wages and allowances along with arrears of two years, the six corporations would require an additional amount of Taka 296 crore this fiscal year.

Following is a comparison of the existing and new pay-scales for workers of the nationalised sector, including fringe benefits:

Grade	Former Scale	New Scale
1	Tk. 560-20-860	Tk. 950-30-1490
2	Tk. 590-22-920	Tk. 1000-35-1630
3	Tk. 620-24-980	Tk. 1050-40-1770
4	Tk. 640-26-1030	Tk. 1100-45-1910
5	Tk. 690-28-1110	Tk. 1175-50-2075
6	Tk. 730-30-1180	Tk. 1225-55-2215
7	Tk. 760-32-1240	Tk. 1275-60-2355
8	Tk. 790-34-1300	Tk. 1325-65-2495
9	Tk. 820-36-1468	Tk. 1375-70-2635
10	Tk. 850-38-1534	Tk. 1425-75-2775
11	Tk. 900-40-1620	Tk. 1500-80-2940
12	Tk. 940-42-1696	Tk. 1550-85-3080
13	Tk. 980-44-1772	Tk. 1600-90-3220
14	Tk. 1020-46-1848	Tk. 1650-95-3360
15	Tk. 1060-48-1924	Tk. 1700-100-3500
16	Tk. 1160-50-2060	Tk. 1800-105-3690

Govt shows lack of farsightedness in raising Farakka issue at UN: Samad

SUNAMGANJ, Oct 24: Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Abudus Samad Azad today said the government had shown its lack of farsightedness in raising the Farakka issue at the United Nations without discussing it with the SAARC member countries, reports UNB.

"We wanted to reach a consensus on the problem through discussion in parliament, but the initiative failed due to government's lack of good intention," he said speaking at the biennial conference of the Dhira Juba League as the chief guest.

The function was presided over by thana Juba League president Nazmul Hossain.

Bomb hurled at puja venue in city: One hurt

By Staff Correspondent

One person was wounded when unidentified men allegedly hurled crackers at a puja venue at Bashbari, Mohammadpur, in the city last night.

Witnesses claimed a group of youngmen exploded crackers at the venue and fled immediately. The wounded man could not be identified.

Mohammadpur police and senior officers of the West Division of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) rushed to the scene.

Mohammadpur police said the puja, however, was held peacefully. No arrested was made until filing of this report at midnight last night.

Son Jewel buried: Manzur Mannan, 2 others still in hospital

By Staff Correspondent

Three-year-old Jewel — only son of Chittagong Customs Collector Manzur Mannan — who died in a road accident on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway Friday was buried at a private graveyard at Azampur yesterday.

Manzur Mannan, his daughter Rumana, 12, and a relative Karim — a businessman who was driving — are still under treatment in the city's Combined Military Hospital (CMH). Mannan's wife was released from the hospital yesterday.

Doctors said the conditions of Mannan and Rumana were improving while relatives said that Karim, 55, who was severely injured in the accident, might have to be sent to Bangkok for treatment.

The mishap occurred when Mannan's car collided head-on with a truck on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway at Madanpur under Bandar thana of Narayanganj Friday afternoon.

Mannan was coming to Dhaka from Chittagong along with six others of his family. Jewel died on the spot and six others were injured.

The Namaz-e-Janaza of Jewel was held at the Azampur Chhapra Mosque at 12:30 pm and he was buried at the Azampur Daira Sharif graveyard.

Accused rapist in police remand

By Staff Correspondent

Mohammad Harun, an accused rapist, was yesterday remanded to Dhanmondi police custody for two days for questioning.

Harun was produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court yesterday.

Moni, 18, a maid servant of Harun's Dhanmondi residence, alleged that Harun and his brother had frequently abused her for a long time.

Dhanmondi police said that following a case lodged by Moni, they had arrested Harun, but his brother was still at large.

Moni was admitted to the Orthopaedic Hospital after she attempted to commit suicide by jumping under a train.

Moni claimed she had decided to kill herself in shame and desperation after fleeing from a house in Pagla on the Dhaka-Narayanganj road where she had been kept confined by the accused and his men.

AL demonstration

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party activists on October 13.

In a statement issued to the press last night, Hasina alleged that the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) had been denying the people their constitutional rights to hold rallies and bring out processions against the 'corrupt practices' of the government.

Today's AL demonstration programmes include holding of rallies and processions across the country.

Hasina, in her statement, said despite restoration of a parliamentary system of governance, the accountability of the government as well as the administration was yet to be established. The judiciary had not yet been separated from the executive wing of the state and the Indemnity Ordinance was yet to be repealed, the AL chief complained.

Accusing the government of using the police as a party force, Sheikh Hasina said the government was trying to silence the voice of the people against injustice, corruption and nepotism of the ruling circle.

The world

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The meeting is a run-up to the conference on population and development to be held in Cairo, Egypt next September.

The scientists will try to come up with a plan to tell governments about how to check population growth and devise strategies for better use of resources to feed people, said Dr. Nafis Sadik, UN Population Fund chief, who is in New Delhi for the meeting.

"Population growth means that there are more poor people in the world than ever before and fewer prospects for an improvement in their lives," Sadik said in an interview.

Governments should spend at least "20 per cent of national budgets for the social sector," she said.

The UN says low literacy among women and poor health care are the major causes of high fertility rates in developing nations. The world body plans to educate women as a way of solving the problem.

Hasina demands
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The government-backed student organisation had kept the campus hostage through its terrorism.

Hasina welcomed the victory of the Chhatra League in the Hajj Asmat College at a time when the ruling party had 'unleashed a reign of terror' across the country.

Party central leaders Begum Sajeda Chowdhury MP, Zillur Rahman and Obaidul Qader, and newly elected college VP Mohammad Mohsin and GS Lablu also spoke on the occasion.



Ms Eimi Watanabe, Resident Representative of the UNDP addressing a seminar on the United Nations Day organised by the United Nations Association of Bangladesh (UNAB) at the Hotel Purbani in the city yesterday. Syed Ahmed Hossain, Secretary General of the UNAB, Begum Sarwari Rahmap, the State Minister for Women's Affairs, M Saifur Rahman, the Finance Minister, and Professor Innas Ali, the president of the UNAB are seen sitting on her left. — Star photo

Queen plans to stand down as C'wealth head for Charles?

LONDON, Oct 24: Queen Elizabeth is considering standing down as head of the Commonwealth in favour of her son and heir prince Charles, British newspapers said today, reports Reuters.

"The Queen is anxious to give him a new constitutional role to prepare him for when he eventually succeeds to the throne, according to diplomatic sources," The Mail on Sunday said.

It and the News of the World quoted a senior political aide as saying the Queen and British Prime Minister John Major discussed the idea in Cyprus at a meeting of heads of state of the Commonwealth.

The loosely knit organisation groups Britain and 49 former colonies in the developed and developing world.

The Queen is still head of state of several Commonwealth members but Australia seems headed towards becoming a republic and may be followed by Canada, New Zealand and other states.

Meanwhile, British government officials today denied the reports.

The said that nothing like the story reported had been discussed by the Queen and the

Prime Minister at the Commonwealth summit and described it as completely without foundation.

AP adds: Commonwealth leaders' meeting at a luxury hotel finally got around to discussing South Africa, a subject that once kept their summits raging for days.

During a weekend retreat in the coastal town of Paphos, Cyprus, Commonwealth leaders on Saturday discussed strengthening an observer group in South Africa.

The African National Congress wants Britain and its 49 former colonies to do more to help bring about the end of white-minority rule in South Africa. Right-wing white groups have boycotted the negotiations, along with the Zulu Inkatha movement, a black group opposed to Nelson Mandela's ANC.

"We are here to get support for the negotiations and help for everyone to return to them," said ANC chairman Thabo Mbeki.

"There must be no going back on what has been decided so far."

During the break from the five-day summit that continues Monday, Commonwealth leaders also drew up a list of major

capitals where they plan to lobby for a world free trade agreement.

The mission will stop in Paris, Washington, London, Geneva, Brussels, Belgium and Bonn, Germany, said Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating late Saturday.

Keating said he hoped countries holding up the trade agreement, particularly France, would head the Commonwealth plea. The 50-nation Commonwealth encompasses one-third of the world's countries ranging from the very rich to the very poor.

A Dec 15 deadline for a trade deal has been set by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the 115-nation forum for negotiations that have dragged on for seven years. French resistance to deeper cuts in farm subsidies is a major stumbling block.

For years, denouncing apartheid and arguing over Britain's reluctance — and then refusal — to impose tough embargoes against South Africa provided the motor for Commonwealth summits.

But with South African making progress toward ending white-minority rule, this year's gathering has shifted focus to launching a free trade crusade.

Saifur

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"The question is whether the UN will be the peace-keeper or the peace-maker," he added and stressed the need for developing a unified command system in order to keep peace in the world.

The Finance Minister was bitterly critical of the industrialised nations who advise the third world countries for preserving the environment.

"The environment has been degraded because the developed nations ruined it. When we, the third world countries, are trying to develop our nations through industrialisation, they are imposing rigid conditionalities on us," he said.

Rahman was also critical of the western advice to do away with child labour. "There were child labours in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries... now they say they will not buy products made by the children," he said. "This is another form of exploitation."

He also pointed out that despite the UN call for liberalisation of trade, new economic blocks are emerging in the world creating bottlenecks in the development process of the third world. Racial hatred is also increasing in the western countries, he observed.

Stressing the need for unity of the country's people sinking all their differences, Rahman said the nation would be able to achieve a self-sustaining economy if it could mobilise the resources, reform the administration system, strengthen the legal system and remove frequent hartal, strike and gherao.

Sarwari Rahman, in her speech, lauded the role of the UN saying that it was the only organisation which was committed to carrying on the process of disarmament and development.

UNDP Representative Ms Eimi Watanabe explained the UN System and its role in keeping peace in the world and ensuring development.

Citing the role of the UN peace-keeping forces in different countries, she said it not only worked for keeping peace but also helped attain democracy and development.

Ms Watanabe pointed out that Bangladesh has attained democracy through peaceful election in 1991. "But this is not enough to face the major challenges. It must be ensured that all government organisations work according to democratic norms."

She underscored the need for establishing law and order, responsible judiciary and mass media system as well as efficient public administration.

The UNDP official also emphasised on spreading education, checking population growth and providing equal opportunity to the women of the country.

New proposal to ensure Aristide's return to power

BEIJING, Oct 24: A new proposal has been made in Haiti in a bid to implement the UN plan to ensure the return to power of exiled Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide before October 30, reports reaching here from Port-au-Prince said today, reports Xinhua.

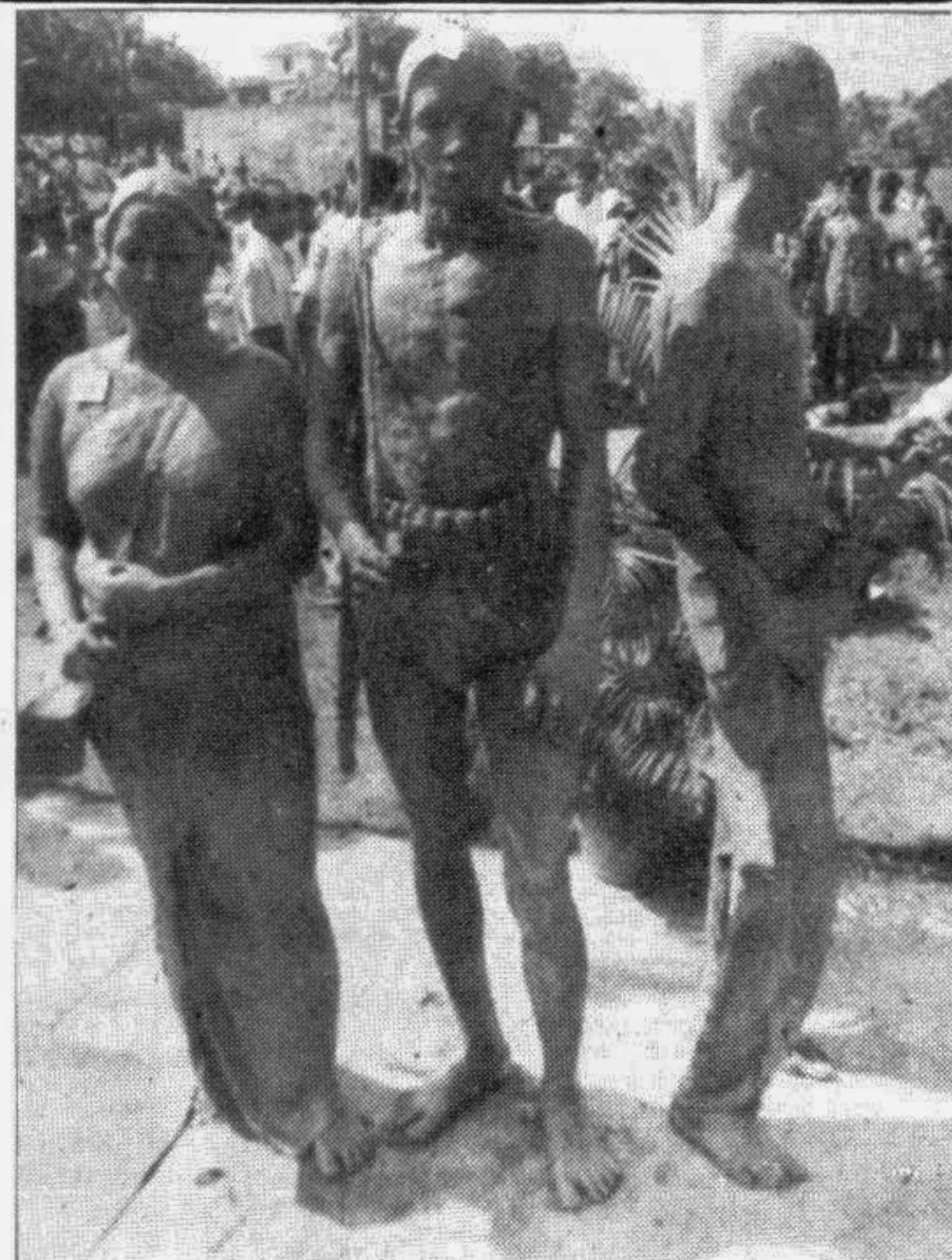
UN envoy Dante Caputo made the disclosure in Port-au-Prince Saturday night but without going into detail.

The proposal came following a meeting between members of Haitian cabinet headed by Premier Robert Malval and top military leaders led by Lt. General Raoul Cedras who reportedly reiterated his intention to resign at the meeting.

Caputo added that he had received a letter from anti-Aristide Members of Parliament demanding a general amnesty law for those involved in the coup that toppled Aristide in September 1991. They also requested that Aristide opponents be included in the cabinet and the UN sanctions lifted.

The UN official described the proposal, led by lower house President Antoine Joseph, as having positive steps.

Aristide had earlier declared an amnesty which was denied by Cedras who feared it could be withdrawn at any time.



Three entrants in the 'dress as you like' competition organised by the Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation in the city yesterday on the occasion of the Tourism Month. — Star photo

Benazir's remarks on Kashmir may strain Indo-Pak ties further

JEDDAH, Oct 24: Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto met with King Fahd on Saturday after reportedly lashing out at Indian security forces for fatally shooting Muslim demonstrators, reports AP.

Her comments, made in Saudi Arabia and reported by Pakistan's national news agency, were likely to further strain the worsening relations between India and Pakistan.

"Such brazen disregard for human lives can only aggravate tension in occupied Kashmir," Benazir said of Friday's killings in the disputed territory claimed by both nations.

She spoke before her meeting in Jeddah with Fahd. Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are two leading Muslim nations with close ties.

Members of her entourage told The Associated Press that the meeting was unscheduled, as Benazir had come to the Kingdom only to perform Umrah (a short pilgrimage) in Mecca Friday.

The aides, who spoke on condition of anonymity, refused to give details of the talks.

At least 38 people were shot dead at two sites in Kashmir as Indian policemen fired on Muslim demonstrators demanding at end to Indian rule of Kashmir.

Benazir said the use of force were "clearly inconsistent with the latest offer of Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao for talks to normalize Indo-Pakistani relations."

Benazir who was sworn in office Tuesday, said she would like to improve ties with neighbouring India. But relations have been worsening by the day as tensions mount in Kashmir.

Xinhua adds: President Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) met late Saturday Benazir Bhutto who arrived in Abu Dhabi from Saudi Arabia on a several hour visit to the UAE.

According to the official UAE news agency WAM today, Benazir discussed with Sheikh

Zayed the current international and regional issues and the situation in the Gulf and the Middle East, ways to support consolidation among Islamic countries in addition to bilateral relations and means to boost cooperation between the UAE and Pakistan.

Diplomatic sources in Abu Dhabi said that bilateral relations topped the high ranking discussion.

Jubo Dal founding anniversary Oct 27
Dhaka City Corporation Mayor and Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal president Mirza Abbas and general secretary and State Minister for Forest and Environment Gayeshwar Chandra Roy yesterday called upon the workers and leaders of the Jubo Dal to celebrate its founding anniversary on October 27 in a belittling manner, reports BSS.

All district and thana level units have been directed to arrange elaborate programmes

The Midnight File

Extremist killed in Cairo prison riot

CAIRO, Oct 24: A suspected Muslim extremist was killed and 72 people were injured Sunday when a third riot in as many months erupted in a Cairo prison holding suspected Muslim radicals. Also Sunday, an Egyptian human rights group estimated the government is holding 3,300 people as Muslim militants, most without formal charges. The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights also said it believed seven prisoners had died of torture since May. Interior Ministry spokesman were not immediately available for comment on the allegations, reports AP.

Five die in Andhra blast

NEW DELHI, Oct 24: A bomb hidden in a television set exploded and killed five members of a family in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh today, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported. The explosion took place when the television set which had been repaired, was switched on by one of the family members in a village in Anantpur district, the news agency said. All five died instantly, reports AFP.

2 Israeli soldiers killed in Gaza

GAZA, Oct 24: Muslim militants abducted and killed two Israeli soldiers in the occupied Gaza Strip today, security sources said. The Muslim fundamentalist movement Hamas said its men abducted the two soldiers, killed them, seized their rifles and dropped their bodies nearby, reports Reuters.

Bijoya Dashami today

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were placed at different Puja venues while at some places the devotees performed ghat puja — to protest an attack on the Jannastami procession in the city celebrating the birthday of Lord Krishna last August.

Meanwhile, the sandhi puja and the nabami puja were observed yesterday throughout the country on the fourth day of the annual Durga puja.

A large number of devotees, including men, women and children, attired mostly in new clothes, thronged different puja venues in the capital and at other places to seek blessings of goddess Durga in the form of mahaprasad (holy offerings).

The Dhakeshwari Mandir will organise a blood donation campaign today as part of the Puja Celebration Committee's decision to render services to the distressed humanity on the occasion.

Meanwhile, KB Roy Chowdhury and Swapan Kumar Shaha, president and general secretary respectively of the Bangladesh Puja Ujjayan Parishad and Anil Chandra Nath and Drijendra Nath Shaha, president and general secretary

Asian Art

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A five-member jury board comprising three foreign and two Bangladeshi judges will declare three Taka 50,000-each awards and a number of prizes of honour.

A 36-member national committee headed by Cultural Secretary Islam Uddin Malik has been organising the show.

The cost of holding the biennale has been estimated at Taka 22 lakh, including a Taka 10 lakh UNESCO contribution.

Meanwhile, the Shilpakala Academy has organised a two-day international seminar on the occasion.

The seminar titled 'Impact of Globalisation on Asian Art Tradition' will begin at 9 am on November 3 at the Academy auditorium.

Some 40 international artists and art critics will attend the seminar and visit the exhibition venues.

Organisers said that printing of brochures and posters for the biennale was nearing completion and those would be released soon.

However, a member of the organising committee, preferring anonymity, told The Daily Star that the promotional campaign for the show needed to be geared up for successful holding of the art festival.

Burundi confirms killing of President Ndayaye

NAIROBI, Oct 24: A Burundian minister has confirmed that deposed president Melchior Ndayaye was killed in a coup Thursday. Rwandan radio monitored here said today, reports AFP.

There is no more doubt about it. Melchior Ndayaye, the democratically elected Burundian president, was assassinated by the putschists who have overthrown his regime.

3 muggers

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came to Dhaka from Narayanganj to meet a director of the Pubali Bank Limited, Giasuddin, at his Dhanmondi residence.

Those arrested are Shahid, 24, Manwar, 25, and Abul Kasem, 25. Police recovered the gold chain from them but two others fled with the handbag and a bangle, said police. The muggers reportedly hurled several crackers at the police during the chase.

Meanwhile, BSS adds: Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda announced an award of Tk 5000 for the brave role of the police in apprehending the culprits.

IPSA

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of Agriculture to turn the IPSA into an autonomous institution with the authority to confer higher degrees was earlier approved in principle by the cabinet in May this year. A draft law for the purpose titled the Institute of Post-graduate Studies in Agriculture (IPSA) Act, 1993 was prepared accordingly by the Agriculture Ministry and was also vetted by the Ministry of Law.

With the passage of the bill by Parliament, the IPSA will be reorganised and undergo reforms. The administrative supervision of the institution will remain with the Agricultural Ministry while the Bangladesh University Grants Commission will look after its curriculum and educational affairs.

A Board will also be constituted to run the newly-structured institution which, according to observers, will significantly contribute towards advancement of studies in agricultural sciences.