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NEWS BRIEFS

President, PM shocked

President Abdur Rahman Biswas and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia have sent separate condolence messages yesterday at the tragic death of Rwanda President Juvenal Habyarimana and Burundi President Cyprien Ntaryamira, reports UNB.

Seminar on 'folk arts and crafts'

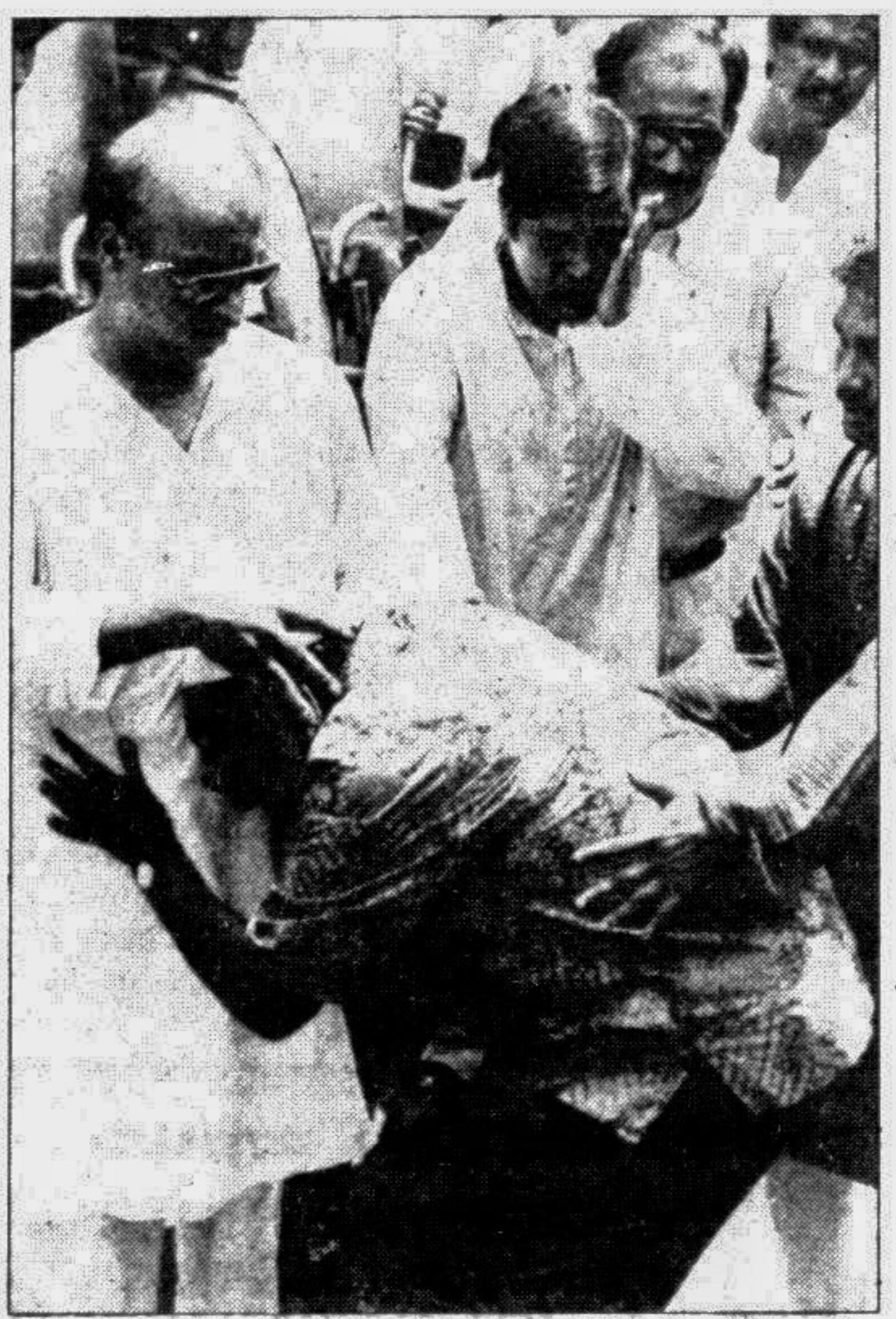
A three-day international seminar on 'Folk Arts and Crafts of Asia and the Pacific Region' will begin from April 10 at the Shilpkala Academy in Dhaka. Besides, a three-week long folk arts and crafts exhibition will also begin simultaneously at the Academy, reports UNB.

W Bengal minister meets Oli

The Transport Minister of West Bengal government Shayamol Chakraborty, called on Communications Minister Oli Ahmed at his official residence in Dhaka yesterday. Chakraborty said that the West Bengal government would actively contribute for further strengthening the existing friendly relationship between Bangladesh and India, reports BSS.

100 hurt in sporadic clashes: Samad Azad hospitalised
2 gunned down during siege

By Staff Correspondent



Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League Presidium Member Abdus Samad Azad ducking after being hit by a stone from behind near the party office at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city yesterday. — Star photo

At least two persons were killed and nearly 100 injured, several of them seriously, in sporadic clashes during the Secretariat siege programme called by the main opposition Awami League yesterday.

Mustafa Aminur Rasul Paran, an intermediate student of the New Model Degree College and Habibur Rahman Milon, a Class IX student of Rustom Ali High School, Demra, succumbed to bullet injuries after unidentified gunmen opened fire on a militant crowd at Siddique Bazar where it meets Nawabpur Road at around 1:00 pm yesterday.

Both the victims died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital at around 1:30 pm.

Over a dozen others also received bullet injuries at the spot.

Before the shooting, Awami League activists were exchanging brickbats with Jubo Dal activists who had taken positions at the local Jubo Dal office at Suritali near the Nawabpur Road.

Both the Awami League and the BNP accused each other of being involved in the killings.

The Awami League had announced its plans to lay a siege to the Secretariat in demand of the resignation of the government and early general elections under a caretaker government.

The Jatiya Party also

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From the frontline

A team of Daily Star reporters and photographers covered first hand yesterday's activities from various vantage points in the city.

They were positioned at the Shapla Square, the Dainik Bangla intersection, the Ramna Park Star Gate, Bangabandhu Avenue, Press Club, near the Secretariat itself and the Election Commission. Most of our reporters later moved towards the city centre which eventually became the focus of events.

Here are excerpts from some of the dispatches filed by our correspondents:

Ramna Park Star Gate
Intermittent brick-batting

by AL activists and sporadic police baton-charges kept the area near the Star Gate of the Ramna Park — some 150 yards from the Foreign Office — tense during the planned siege.

Police, chasing the demonstrators, arrested two young men — Mohammad Masum and Mafizur Rahman — around 1:45 pm and sent them to the Police Control Room at Shahbagh.

Police blocked the road from Shahbagh to the Star Gate to traffic barring rickshaws. Passers-by were also intercepted.

After some two hours of peaceful picketing the

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Press Note : 2 shot by hoodlums

The government in a Press Note said last night that two persons were shot at by armed hoodlums when looting and lawlessness were taking place at Siddique Bazar area in the city during yesterday's 'Secretariat siege' programme called by the Awami League, reports BSS.

The Home Ministry in its Press Note said wounded persons — Aminur Rashid Paran and Milon — were rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the attending doctors declared them dead.

The government expressed its deep sorrow at this tragic incident and directed the authorities concerned to bring the culprits into book immediately for trial.

The Press Note said 36 persons were arrested in connections with acts of terrorism and violence which took place during yesterday's siege programme. Cases have been started against them.

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Riot police armed with tear-gas guns, shields and truncheons march under a heavy cover of tear-gas smoke towards stone-throwing demonstrators at the North South Road in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Countrywide strikes Apr 10 and 26

AL announces package of programmes

By Staff Correspondent

The Awami League (AL) yesterday evening announced a package of anti-government programmes, including two nationwide general strikes on April 10 and 26, in protest against the deaths of its party activists during yesterday's siege of the secretariat.

The announcement came from the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and AL chief Sheikh Hasina at a press conference held yesterday evening at her Minto Road residence.

Hasina accused the ruling party activists of the killings and observed that the government headed by Begum Khaleda Zia should immediately quit for the holding of parliamentary polls under a caretaker government.

AL president member Amir Hossain Amu, who also ad-

Salam Talukdar's statement

AL activists, angered by failure, kill 2

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukdar has accused "the Awami League-backed terrorists" of killing two youths during yesterday's AL siege programme in the capital.

In a statement last night, Salam Talukdar said "the unruly AL activists, angered by the failure of the party's programme, created a reign of terror in the city's Kaptanbazar and Siddiqbazar areas by firing shots, exploding bombs and damaging shops. Two persons were shot by the AL's gunmen, he added.

The ruling party leader regretted that innocent people were dying as the AL did not change its political strategy. The AL had once again started what he said, the politics of

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Gunmen down plane

Presidents of Rwanda, Burundi killed

NAIROBI (Kenya), Apr 7: Fighting broke out in Rwanda's capital Thursday after the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi were killed when their plane was apparently shot down, reports UNB.

Presidents Juvenal Habyarimana of Rwanda and Cyprian Ntaryamira of Burundi were on their way home from a summit in Tanzania that was aimed at bringing peace to their strife-torn central African nations when their plane crashed Wednesday night near the Kigali airport.

Rwanda's government said the plane "was shot down" while landing "by unidentified elements in circumstances which are still unclear."

Members of Rwanda's presidential guard also kidnapped three cabinet ministers and three UN military observers Thursday. UN spokesman Moctar Gueye said.

The identity of the kidnappers or those who allegedly shot down the plane was not immediately known. Both Rwanda and Burundi have been wracked for decades by fighting between the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups, one of Africa's most savage ethnic feuds. Both leaders were Hutus.

Gueye, speaking by telephone from the Rwandan capital Kigali, said there were reports of house-to-house

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Merrill meets PM, assures support

The United States of America (USA) will continue its support to the ongoing process of democracy and economic reforms in Bangladesh being carried out by the present government, reports BSS.

This was told by the newly-appointed US Ambassador in Bangladesh David Nathan Merrill, during his first meeting with the Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday afternoon.

The US Ambassador said Bangladesh has achieved true economic development in the last three years under the leadership of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and added: The country was proceeding towards progress.

Referring to Bangladesh's macro-economic stability, Merrill said realistic and timely measures taken by the government had helped the

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3 killed as truck ploughs into city slum

By Staff Correspondent

A woman and two children were killed and six others injured, all in their sleep, when a speeding truck ploughed into their shacks in a road-side slum on the Bishash Road in the city's Mugda early yesterday morning.

Of the injured, a woman is in a critical condition.

Three of the injured including the woman — Banu, 30, — were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). Three other injured were given first aid. The other two admitted could not be identified.

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Talbott discusses N-issue in Delhi

NEW DELHI, Apr 7: US Deputy Secretary of State Strooban Talbott discussed nuclear non-proliferation and sought to smooth ruffled Indian feathers during a whirlwind day of talks here today, reports AFP.

Talbott had a 45-minute session with Foreign Secretary Kris Srinivasan.

In brief remarks to reporters, Talbott, an expert on nuclear disarmament, said the meeting went "very well" and that both sides had "wasted no time in getting down to the business which lies ahead."

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