

# Down to Earth

## Divorce Cases in City

By A S M Nurunnabi

There is a saying: Getting married is easy. Staying married is more difficult. Staying happily married for a lifetime should rank among the fine arts. Staying happily married is admittedly an enviable ideal, but it becomes a tragedy when in the life of some, staying married presents difficulties which ends in its being irretrievably broken down.

The ease with which a divorce is obtained in different countries varies considerably, and is also affected by different religious practices. In our country, divorce proceedings are regulated by the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961. Under this law, when any man wishes to divorce his wife, he shall, as soon as may be after the pronouncement of *talaq* (divorce) in any form whatsoever, give the Chairman of the Arbitration Council notice in writing of his having done so, and shall supply a copy thereof to the wife. The Chairman in this context means (i) the Chairman of the Union Parishad; (ii) the Chairman of the Paurashava; (iii) the Mayor or Administrator of the Municipal Corporation. If need be, a person with suitable legal background may be deputed to act as Chairman in all such cases.

From available statistics, it appears that divorce is becoming a growing sociological problem in the city. From statistics available, during the period 12.2.92 to 31.12.92, the total number of divorce petitions filed with the Corporation according to law was 1,180. Of this total figure, the number of divorce petitions initiated by the wife was 790 and by the husband 390. In this respect, the percentage works out at 66% and 34% respectively. The number of reconciliation effected through the medium of the Chairman as per law was 51. For the subsequent year, i.e. 1.1.93 to 31.12.93, the total figure was 1,320. The break-up of this total figure is 960 by the wife and 360 by the husband with

the percentage of 72.72 and 27.28 respectively. The rate of reconciliation through the agency of the Corporation was 10%. For the current year up to the end of March, 1994, the total number of divorce petitions received by the Corporation is understood to be 320.

From the short range of the period noted above, it will appear that there is an increasing trend in the number of divorce cases in the city. Another notable feature is that the wife took the leading role in the majority of cases.

The increasing preponderance of the wife in the filing of divorce cases is significant from the sociological point of view. There may be several factors for this. The most important one may be the comparative economic independence of women at present in urban areas. Previously the comparative economic helplessness of women accounted to a large extent for their acquiescence in accepting their fate whatever be the causes of their maladjustment with their husbands. The spread of education among women in recent years may have also played a part in their economic independence, particularly in urban areas. This trend can be seen to a greater degree in advanced countries. This is perhaps inevitable in any country where with the march of education women gradually emerge from their isolation within the four walls of their homes.

It is well known that in western countries which are less conservative and more progressive than us, the number of divorces has been steadily increasing over the years. For instance, in the UK, between 1945 and 1990, there has been eight-fold increase in divorce.

There is one important feature in our legal system of granting divorce. The mandatory routing of divorce petitions through the Chairman, Arbitration Council exerts a moderating influence in settling marital disputes ending

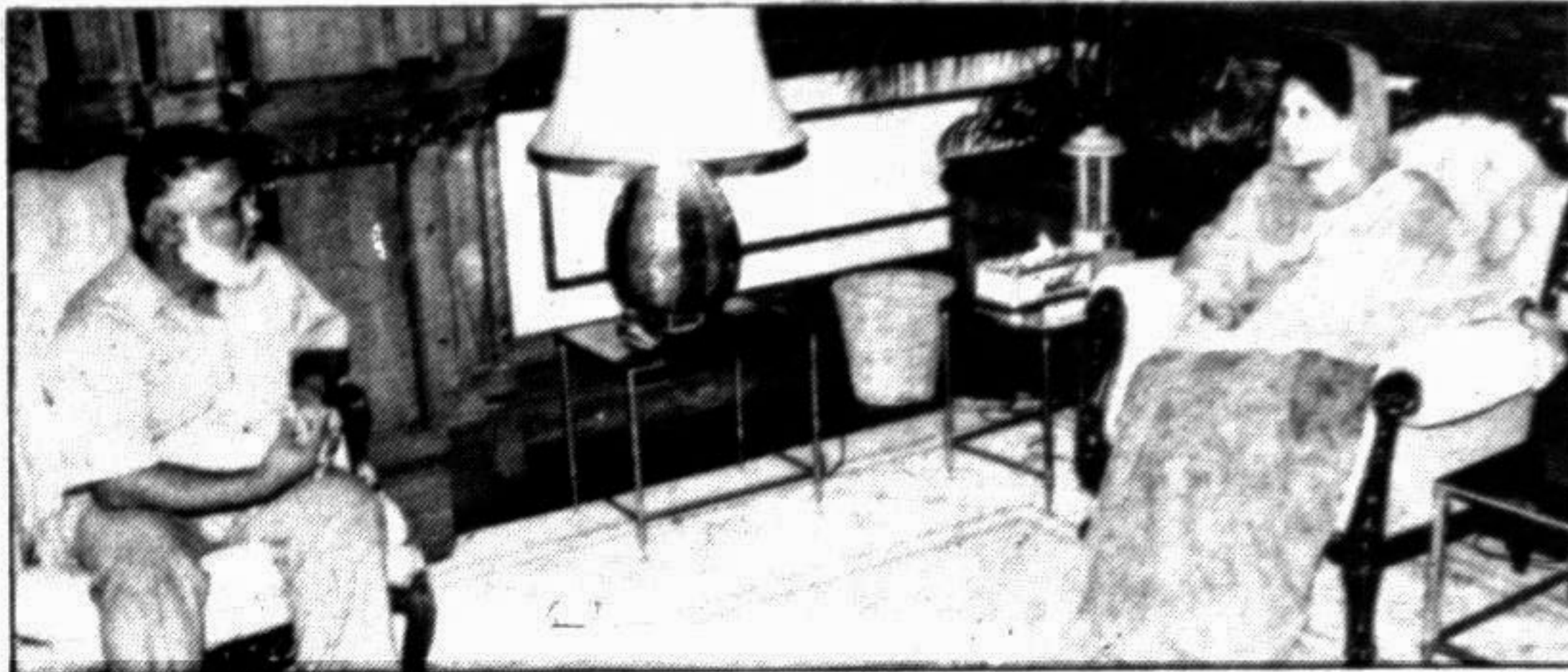
in divorce petitions. Since a divorce cannot be made absolute within 90 days of the *iddat* period, the Chairmen of the Arbitration Councils play a helpful role in bringing about reconciliation between the parties during that period.

It has been seen that during the long period of *iddat*, much of the intensity of the disputes providing the grounds for divorce is tempered with more cool-headed after-thought and where there are children to think of, more sobriety prevails in the thought pattern of the parties which tend them more to a reconciliation. In this respect, the intermediary role played by the Chairmen of Arbitration Councils goes a long way to help.

Of course there are some intractable cases which are beyond help. On queries to sources, it is learnt that divorce cases mainly arise, as the present trend shows, from two classes of society — the upper and the lower. Besides, among the lower classes, there are many unregistered marriages where divorces, if any, go unrecorded.

The Arbitration Councils also play a part in granting permission for second marriages. Some statistics are available on this account. During the period from 12.2.92 to 29.6.93, 10 applications were received by the Dhaka City Corporation for permission for second marriage. Out of this number, permission was given in 4 cases, 2 cases were rejected and 4 cases are still pending. During the current year only in one case permission for remarriage was granted.

Obviously the picture of Dhaka's increasing divorce rate is part of a wider picture in the country. But such a process is inexorable. After all, marital relation is at bottom a question of personal relationship which is the product of sumtotal of values of a particular generation, which are always in a state of flux in a changing society.



Meer Jahan Master, BNP leader and father of Habibur Rahman Milon who was killed by terrorists at Kaptan Bazar in the city Thursday, called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her Sugandha office yesterday. — PID photo

## JMB foundation laying

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a 230 KV electrical power line, a high pressure natural gas pipeline and telecommunication cables.

The length of the approach road from the existing national road network to the bridge viaducts will be 15.3 kilometres on the east from Elenka on the Tangail-Modhupur road and 14.4 kilometres from the west from the Nalka bridge on the Sirajganj-Hatikamrul road.

Major construction works will be done through four contracts for which the JMB has already issued letters of acceptance on March 21. Tender procedures, including pre-qualification of international contractors, started in January 1992.

The bridge authority has announced Hyundai Construction Co. Ltd of South Korea as the lowest bidder for the US dollar 247.4 million Contract 1: Bridge and Approach Viaducts (pre-stressed concrete bridge on concrete-steel piling).

The targeted completion date for Contract 1 is November 30, 1997.

HAM/Van Oord ACZ Joint Venture of the Netherlands is the lowest bidder for the costliest Contract 2: River Training Works and Reclamation. The estimated cost of the job is about US dollars 276 million with a June 1996 completion date.

Contract Nos. 3&4: Construction of East and West Road Approaches were awarded to Samwhan Corporation of South Korea. The East Road Approach and the West Road Approach are expected to be completed on March 31, 1996 with a cost of US dollars 29.1 million and 26.6 million respectively.

Rehabilitation of the East Flood Embankment-cum-Access road has been completed on August 31 last year by AML-MONICO Consortium with a

cost of US dollars six million.

Three consultants — Rendel, Palmer & Tritton (RPT) of Britain, NEDECO (Haskoning) of the Netherlands and Bangladesh Consultants Ltd (BCL) — have done the feasibility study, the design of the bridge and prepared tender documents for the project.

The contractors will mobilise their heavy equipment and engineers as soon as the bridge's foundation is laid. The river training job, first of the two major works, which will take three dry seasons to complete, are expected to start this September.

Hyundai, the main bridge contractor, will begin work during the third dry season, i.e. sometime in late 1996. It was learnt.

An estimated 77,000 people in the project areas on both the river banks as well as on the *chars* may be displaced as work gets underway.

JMB sources said steps had already been taken to resettle the affected people at a cost of US dollars 46 million. This programme will include wide-ranging training programme for them followed by self relocation of the affected people.

Besides, the project is conforming to strict environmental protection and there will be afforestation schemes in the project areas.

As construction of the bridge gets underway, the country's economy is likely to have a shot in the arm with a large number of people being employed on the project.

Bangladesh Railway is expected to earn an additional Tk 300 million annually during the construction period for carrying boulders to the project site. The owners of river vessels are also expected to cash in by carrying of materials and equipment in the project area.

## Milon's father meets Khaleda

Mir Jahan Master, father of Habibur Rahman Milon who was killed during Thursday's siege programme of the Awami League, called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her Sugandha office yesterday.

Milon was the eldest son of Jahan Master, a businessman of Dogair in Demra area of the city, who had joined the BNP with Moshir Rahman Jadu Mia during its early stage.

The Prime Minister expressed shock at the tragic death of Milon and deep sympathy for the members of his bereaved family.

Jahan Master informed the Prime Minister that Milon, a Class VIII student of the Rustam Ali High School in Demra, was killed in front of Municipal Market at Gulistan when he was going to see her ailing grandmother in a city hospital during the siege.

When he received bullet injury, Master alleged, the Awami League leaders and workers called photographers to take his snap instead of sending him to the hospital. Milon might not have died if they rushed him to hospital, he added.

Jahan Master, father of three sons and two daughters, hailed from Kalyankathi of Jhalakathi district.

Begum Zia hoped that good sense would prevail upon all concerned to prevent recurrence of such tragic incident.

BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukder, Education Minister Jamiruddin Sircar, Salahuddin Ahmed, MP, Amanullah Aman, MP, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal president Fazul Haq Milon and general secretary Nazimuddin Alam were present on the occasion.

Earlier, the namaj-e-janaza of Milon was held at Dogair after the Jumma prayers and he was buried at the family graveyard. Salahuddin Ahmed, MP, and other local leaders of the BNP attended the janaza.

# The Midnight File

## 34 Kurds killed in clash with Turkish troops

ANKARA, Apr 8: Thirty-four Kurdish guerrillas and six Turkish soldiers were killed in four days of clashes in Turkey's southeast provinces, a security statement said today. Thirty rebels of the separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) were killed in a combined air and land attack launched on Tuesday against their mountain strongholds in Bitlis province, the regional emergency rule said, reports Reuter.

## War may break out anytime, says DPRK

TOKYO, Apr 8: North Korea, embroiled in a dispute with the West over a suspected nuclear weapons programme, said today a war could break out at anytime on the divided peninsula. The tense situation in which a war may break out at any time has been created in our country owing to the vicious anti-socialist, anti-DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) campaigns of the imperialists and other international reactionary forces. North Korea's Vice Marshal Choe Kwang said, reports Reuter.

## ALWC meets Apr 15

A meeting of the Awami League Working Committee will be held at its party central office here on April 15 at 3 pm. Leader of the Opposition and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina will preside.

## JCD claims

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licity secretary of the JCD, New Model Degree College unit, and JCD Lalbagh Than joint convener.

Condemning the killings, he said Paran had always been an active supporter of BNP. He contested for the post of the executive member in the election to the New Model Degree College students council as a JCD nominee in 1991.

In order to testify to Paran's true political affiliation, the JCD president showed a poster published during the college election in 1991.

Fazul Haq Milon alleged that "some AL leaders had put pressure on the parents of Paran and Milon — a school student — Thursday night to declare that their sons were the members of the AL."

Terminating the secretariat siege programme of the Awami League as anti-people, the JCD president said, during the programme, common people were harassed, shops ransacked, looted, and bombed. The Awami League activists unleashed a reign of terror which cannot but make the democracy loving people worried and frustrated.

"The people of the country are well aware of the history of terrorism of the Awami League and the Chhatra League. We thought, the AL would change its policy in the present environment of democracy, but it is what it was," he pointed out.

The JCD leader said the AL's policies had lost direction and its chief Sheikh Hasina "wanted a dead body" to revitalise its politics.

He urged people to resist the anti-people politics of the AL and demanded arrest and trial of the "armed terrorists of the Awami Jubo League and the Chhatra League."

The press conference was also attended by JCD secretary general Nazimuddin Alam and JCD leaders Abul Bhuyan, Nasiruddin Pintu and others.

## AL procession

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the results of the Magura by-polls.

The mourners, wearing black badges started the procession from the premises of the Baitul Mukarram Mosque where the *gayebana janaza* of the two youths, killed on Thursday, was held.

The mourning procession was followed by a brief rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club.

The *gayebana janaza* was attended by the leaders and workers of different political parties and the devotees attending the Jumma prayers. Prominent among them were Abdul Mannan, Tofael Ahmed, MP, Mayor Mohammad Hanif, Zillur Rahman, Amir Hossain Amu, Abdul Jalil, Abul Hasan Choudhury, MP, Shawqat Ali, Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, Mozaffar Hossain Paltu and Obaidul Kader of the AL, Rashed Khan Menon, MP of the Workers Party, Kazi Aref and Hasanul Huq Inu of the JSD and Prof Abdul Mannan Choudhury of the Nirmul Samannaya Committee.

Addressing the mourners rally the AL general secretary Zillur Rahman alleged they had to hold the *gayebana janaza* as the police did not allow them to hold the janaza with the bodies of the victims.

He accused the police and the BNP activists of snatching one body from the BIRDEM and keeping another under their control at the Demra house of the deceased.

This government has started the politics of corpse, the AL leader alleged and demanded arrest of the killers.

Earlier, truck-loads of riot police escorted the mourners from the Baitul Mukarram Mosque during the rally.

With the mourning procession, the AL yesterday began a three-day mourning programme for the victims.

## British police expert in city

By Staff Correspondent  
A British police expert and consultant, Alex Marnoch, arrived in the capital yesterday on a two-week visit to prepare a plan for the development of the Bangladesh police.

It was the first official visit of a British police expert after the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the two countries in March 1993.

The two countries signed the MOU for formulating a corporate strategy and development plan for the Bangladesh police.

## BNP Standing Body meets today

A meeting of the National Standing Committee of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) will be held at 7:30 pm today at the party central office at Naya Paltan. BNP chairperson and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will preside. Members of the Standing Committee have been requested to attend the meeting, reports BSS.

## BNP holds Janaza

From Page 1 Col 5  
Secretary of the organisation's New Model Degree College chapter and joint convener of JCD's Lalbagh thana branch.

The body was taken to the BNP central office from the BIRDEM hospital at about 11 am and hundreds of BNP leaders and workers laid wreaths on the body as a mark of their last respect.

BNP Secretary General and LGED Minister Abdus Salam Talukder, Home Minister Abdul Matin Choudhury, Energy Minister Dr Khandakar Mosharraf Hossain, Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah al-Noman, DUCSU VP Amanullah Aman and JCD leaders, including Fazul Haq Milon attended the janaza.

The body of Paran was then sent by helicopter to his village home at Bilbilash in Bauphal thana of Patuakhali district.

Earlier, addressing the gathering, Salam Talukder accused the Awami League of killing two persons by resorting to terrorist activities on Thursday and strongly condemned the killings.

He also blamed the AL for "pursuing a politics of corpses" and urged all concerned to resist such practices for the sake of democracy.

## AL hartal: Salam

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Referring to the visit of a Japanese investors' team in Bangladesh, he said they (investors) had seen the situation arising out of the Awami League's April 7 'siege' programme. So, naturally, the BNP Secretary General said, the foreign investors might not show interest in investing in Bangladesh.

He referred to a press report yesterday which said the Awami League leaders — Sheikh Selim MP and Kader Siddiqui — had opposed the Awami League's April 7 *gherao* programme at the party's April 6 working committee meeting on the ground that such a programme would be damaging to the country's economy.

The BNP Secretary General said the terrorists of the Awami League had killed two members of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal in Siddique Bazar and Kaptan Bazar Thursday and their attempts to make the political arena unstable by capitalising on the corpses of the two JCD members had failed.

Their (Awami League's) designs to claim the two dead young men as their party workers, he said, had also failed because the family members of the deceased are all active workers and supporters of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

Salam said the Awami League had not only championed the snatching of ballot boxes but this time the people had accused them of attempting to snatch the dead bodies of the two JCD workers to serve its mean political purposes.

## Hosokawa resigns

From Page 1 Col 5

promising to clean up Japan's corrupt politics.

Hosokawa said that although the questions regarding his finances relate to transactions that occurred before he took office and have been "used as a political weapon," they were "something for which I must take moral responsibility."

"I apologise, and ask for your understanding," he said, adding that he made the decision to step down Thursday night after discussing the situation with his wife.

It was unclear when Hosokawa would actually step down, and his successor must be approved by Parliament. The Japan Broadcasting Corp said Hosokawa's Cabinet could offer their resignations as early as Saturday.

Although no clear successor to Hosokawa had yet emerged, speculation centred on Foreign Minister Tsutomu Hata. Coalition leaders met Friday night to discuss the succession.

Hata, who is also Deputy Prime Minister, refused to comment on his own ambitions.

## Ainjibi Forum's concern

Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum yesterday urged the opposition leaders to remain within the fold of democratic norms while staging agitation against the government so that the terrorists could not take the opportunity to exploit the situation, reports BSS.

A press release of the Forum signed by its member secretary Abdul Wadud Khandoker said if the law and order situation deteriorated, country's development would suffer resulting in greater distress of the people.

Criticising main opposition political parties for announcing programmes defying democratic norms to force the government to step down, Khandoker said such act would hinder the process of institutionalising democracy and establishing rule of law in the country.

He urged all concerned specially the lawyers to create public opinion against such unwanted and unlawful activities. It also urged the government to make coordinated efforts to check the activities of the terrorists with iron hands.

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## Alleged dacoit lynched

By DMCH Correspondent

An unidentified man believed to be a dacoit was lynched to death in the city's Uttara early Friday.

Uttara police said that they recovered the body of the man aged around 35 and sent it to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) morgue for autopsy.

Police said quoting local people that some eight dacoits barged into the house of one Abdul Hye at Shawlahati, Uttara, early in the morning.

Following a hue and cry of the members in the household, the dacoits fled except the one who was apprehended by local people and was beaten to death on the spot, police added.

A case was lodged with Uttara Police Station but no arrest was made, said police.

## Milon buried

By Staff Correspondent

The body of Habibur Rahman Milon was buried at his village home at Paradogair, Demra, yesterday morning.

The body of Milon was taken by his relatives from the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue late Thursday night.

His namaj-e-janaza was held at his village where the local MP also attended, Demra police said.

## Quake shakes northern Japan

TOKYO, Apr 8: Authorities lifted a warning for Tsunami waves along Japan's northern Pacific coast following an earthquake Friday. The earthquake, which was centred underneath the Pacific Ocean 220 kilometres (140 miles) off the northern coast of Japan, had a preliminary reading of 6.6 on the Richter scale, the Central Meteorological Agency said.

Tsunami are large ocean waves generated by earthquakes or undersea volcanic activity, reports AP.

## NASA scraps shuttle flight

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. Apr 8: Bad weather forced NASA to scrap Friday's liftoff of space shuttle Endeavour on a flight to study Earth's surface with the most sophisticated environment-monitoring radar ever built, reports AP.

Lunch officials said they would try again Saturday, when more favourable conditions were expected.

Endeavour holds what NASA says is the finest space radar ever designed for environmental research.



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

## Hasina at city AL meet

From Page 1 Col 3

without people being killed by the BNP terrorists," she alleged.

The culprits of the Lalbagh killings and the killers of police officer Farhad staged the murders Thursday under police protection, she alleged.

Referring to the namaj-e-janaza of those killed during the Awami League's siege of the Secretariat programme, Hasina said the BNP snatched away the bodies by using the administration.

The Awami League chief said those who killed people during the siege programme were not arrested. On the contrary, innocent people have been arrested under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

She said it is the old practice of the BNP to make a cock-and-bull story of an inci-

dent and shift the responsibility on to others according to their conveniences. This time also the BNP is engaged in false propaganda to mislead the people.

Hasina said the autocratic and repressive steps of the BNP have crossed the limits of tolerance. She called for stepping up the current agitation by ignoring all kinds of threats, intimidation and temptations.

The meeting was addressed by Abdul Mannan, Zillur Rahman, Amir Hossain Amu, Tofael Ahmed, Abdul Jalil, Begum Matia Chowdhury, Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, Abdul Mannan, Advocate Shahara Khatun, K M Jahangir, MP, Rezauddin Ahmed, Mozaffar Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Akhtarul Alam and Advocate Qamrul Islam.

## Rejoinder

From Page 1 Col 3

others have reported the incident differently. It is perhaps no coincidence that only The Daily Star and a few other papers have chosen to adhere closely to the Government's version of events.

I hope you will kindly publish this clarification in your paper in order to dispel the misleading impression that was created by your report.

Yours sincerely, Mohammed Nasim, Chief Whip, Bangladesh Awami League Parliamentary Party.

## Ultimatum

From Page 1 Col 8

ity and promotion, allowing pay scales to the teachers as admissible and creating more posts at college level by April 24.

Meanwhile, a section of government college teachers who had earlier called a strike scheduled to begin today has decided to withdraw their programme following a discussion with Education Minister Jamir Uddin Sircar at his residence.

## Samad Azad advised complete rest

The condition of Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad, who was injured during Thursday's Secretariat siege programme, remained unchanged yesterday, reports UNB.

The Awami League president member was admitted to PG Hospital with head injuries. He was feeling pain in his head this evening, party sources said.

Azad, who is undergoing treatment under Prof Afzal Hossain, has been advised complete rest.

## BCL's claim

From Page 1 Col 4

the Chhatra League (ML). Paran was the Organising Secretary of Lalbagh Ward No 66. He came to join the siege programme of our party but the hoodlums of Khaleda Zia killed him". Mainuddin said.

The BCL president urged the JCD leaders and "corrupt ministers" not to play with the life of the people.

The press conference held at Madhus Canteen of the Dhaka University was attended by BCL leaders including Iqbalur Rahim, Akhtar Hossain, K H M Liza and Pankaj Deb Nath.