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NEWS BRIEFS

Biswas concerned

President Abdur Rahman Biswas expressed his deep concern at the rising number of deaths due to recent launch disaster in the river Meghna near Chandpur. President Biswas, who has been keeping day to day information about the progress of rescue operation of the ill-fated motor launch MV Dinar, expressed his profound sorrow at the loss of so many lives at the tragic incident, reports BSS.

Body begins probe

CHANDPUR, Aug 27: The four-member enquiry committee to probe the Chandpur launch disaster began its function here today, examining 20 eye-witnesses, including eight passengers, reports BSS.

Hasina goes to Chandpur today

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina will visit Chandpur today to console the bereaved family members of the victims of the launch capsizing in Chandpur. She will also offer special prayers for the victims there, reports BSS.

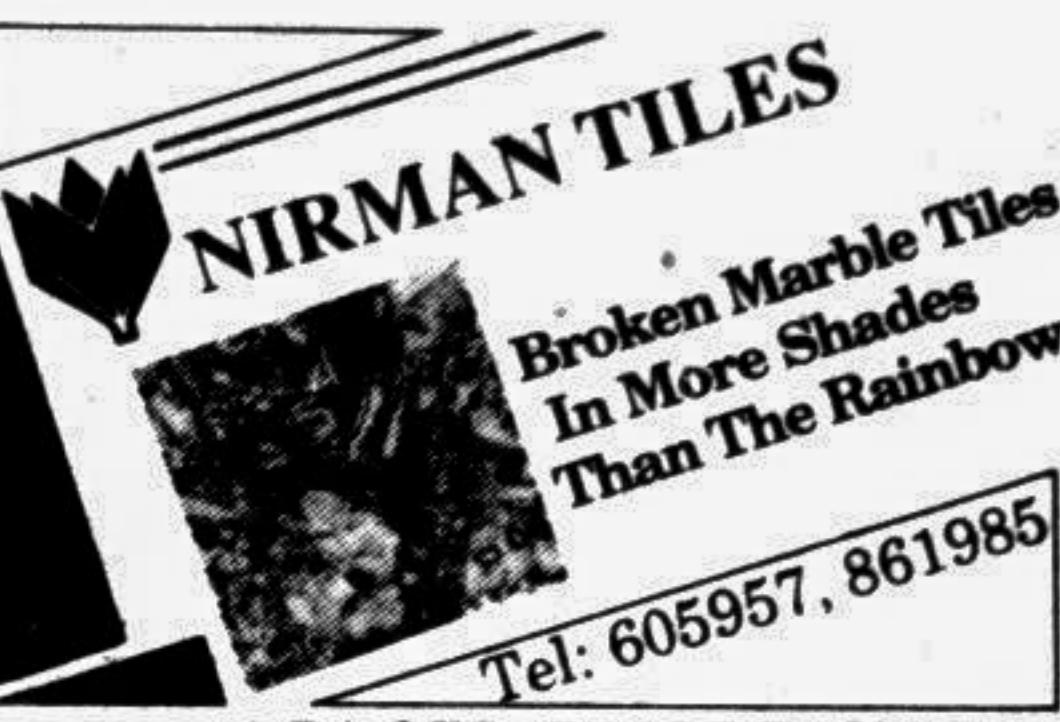
Businessmen call hartal in Pabna

PABNA, Aug 27: District Business Unity Council called a dawn to dusk hartal in the district tomorrow demanding abolition of present committee of the Chamber of Commerce and Industries. In support of their hartal call, the business community brought out a procession in the town today and paraded the main thoroughfares.

BDRCS relief for flood victims

The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) has sent truck-load of relief goods for the flood affected people of Pabna, Chapainawabganj, Kushtia and Rajshahi. The relief goods included sarees, lunges, shirts, frocks, old cloths and emergency foods, reports BSS.

# The Daily Star



## Formal dialogue soon, hope BNP leaders

By Asiuzzaman

A formal dialogue between the ruling party and Opposition negotiators may begin within a couple of days, a ruling party source hinted yesterday.

We are waiting for a reply from the Opposition and I hope the reply would be positive," said the source, who is also one of the three negotiators designated by the BNP Standing Committee to begin dialogue with the Opposition.

Talking to The Daily Star last night, on condition of anonymity, the source said both sides agreed on the need to end the deadlock.

Another BNP source said

that the proposal for a formal dialogue was conveyed by the Deputy Leader of the House Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury to his counterpart Abdus Samad Azad.

The source also claimed that the two-day meeting of the Awami League Central Working Committee (ALCWC) which concluded in the city yesterday had been convened to discuss the issue of a dialogue.

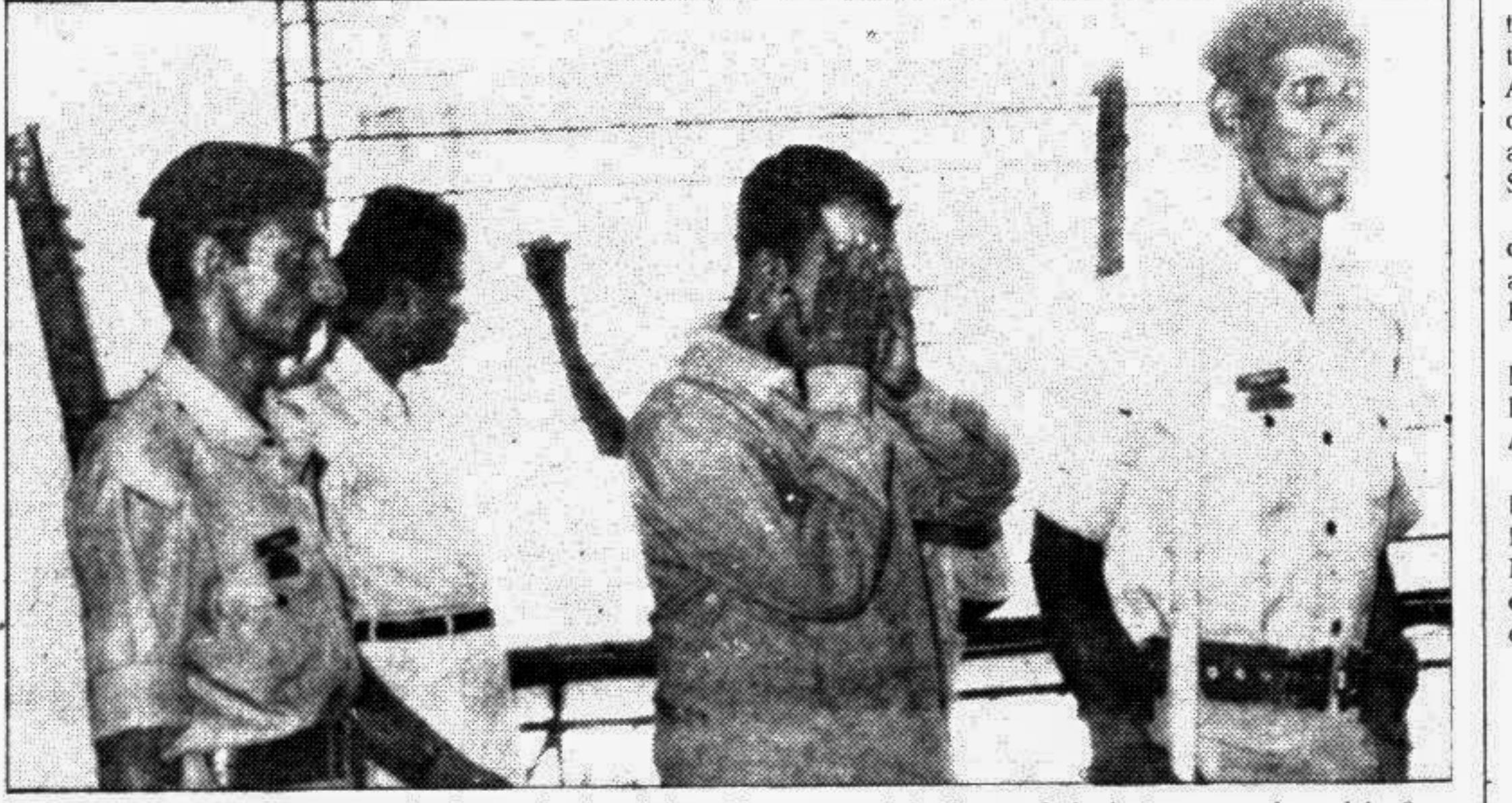
The Opposition response is expected to be conveyed within a day or two after consultation among the major parties, yet another source hinted.

This source said the Parlia-

ment session beginning August 30 would last a week. However, should a fruitful dialogue get started then the session might be prolonged.

Expressing optimism, the source, a senior minister, said "If we discuss the issue of fair elections then I hope we will reach a consensus. But if the Opposition keeps insisting on its so-called one-point demand to topple the government, then it would be futile."

He admitted that both the ruling party and the Opposition were now facing public pressure to resolve the impasse, which should anger well for an early resolution of the crisis.



Maj Abdul Halim, accused of murdering his wife, covers his face while being produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court yesterday.

— Star photo

## Army major arrested on charge of murder

By Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 27: The parliamentary sub-committee on hill tracts affairs is scheduled to hold the third round of informal talks with the leaders of the Shantibahini tomorrow at Dudukchhari under Panchchhari thana of Khagrachhari district.

According to an official source, the informal talks aim at paving the way for the next round of crucial dialogue between the parliamentary committee headed by Communications Minister Md. Ahsan and the Shantibahini leaders.

Major Abdul Halim, charged with murdering his wife Rehana, was produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court yesterday.

Halim made a confessional statement before Metropolitan Magistrate Md. Hannan.

Later, he was sent to the Dhaka Central Jail.

Halim was arrested yesterday at 9:30 am from his Cantonment office and produced before the court at 12 noon. Earlier, Cantonment police obtained permission from the Army for his arrest.

Magistrate Hannan recorded his confessional statement as per article 164 of the CRPC.

Halim, in his statement, reportedly confessed that he hit his wife with an iron rod being irritated with her behaviour. But, he didn't expect to cause her death, he said.

Halim alleged that his wife was very arrogant and aggressive. They were not at all happy in their 11-year married life, he said and added that Rehana 35, had even neglected and misbehaved with his mother. Rehana also reportedly made very derogatory remarks.

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