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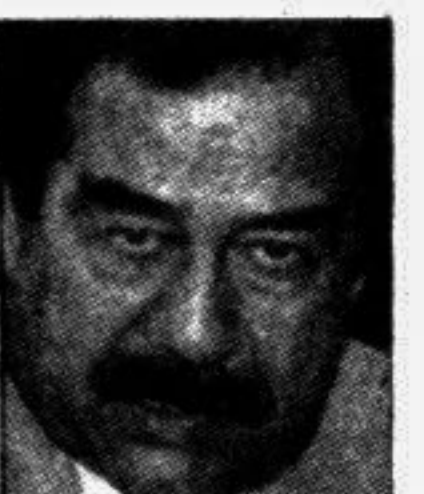
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Singers welcoming the Bengali season of *Sharat* (autumn) at a function organised at the Charukala Institute in the city yesterday. — Star photo

## Violent protest against TV newscast in Urdu

## Four killed in Bangalore police firing

NEW DELHI, Oct 7: Four people were killed in the southern Indian city of Bangalore today when police opened fire to break up a violent protest against Urdu-language news bulletins on state-run television, AFP quoting PTI reported.

Police opened fire after the demonstrators engaged in violence, arson and looting, officials in Bangalore, capital of Karnataka state, told the news agency.

It said angry crowds demanding the scrapping of Urdu news on the Doordarshan television network set fire to vehicles and buses in the city's main business district. The demonstrators also ransacked shops and stoned policemen.

Police opened fire after failing to control the crowd with baton charges and tear gas, PTI said.

AP adds: Pulli Kodandaramiah, commissioner of police

**BANGALORE, Oct 7: The police issued shoot at sight orders to contain escalated violence here. Dusk-to-dawn curfew has also been imposed on nine police station limits, reports PTI.**

In Bangalore, said at least seven people were killed and 83 injured.

"The situation is under control," Kodandaramiah told The Associated Press.

The Press Trust of India news agency said several policemen were injured by the stone-throwers.

Two senior police officers were hospitalised with head and chest injuries as they were hit by bottles, Kodandaramiah said.

Since Sunday, when the 10-minute Urdu newscasts began, Hindu activists have been protesting them every day in Bangalore.

Kannada is the official language in Karnataka state, where the business center of Bangalore is located.

For 12 years, activists have been demonstrating against English, the language many state governments have used since Britain ruled India. Pro-Kannada activists have forced the Karnataka government to reduce the official use of English.

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## Myanmar stops repatriation fearing 'spread of plague'

COX'S BAZAR, Oct 7: The process of repatriation of some 1,70,000 Rohingya refugees came to a halt yesterday as Myanmar refused entry to anyone from Bangladesh fearing 'plague contagion'.

The Myanmar authorities refused to receive 930 refugees who were to return to their homeland Thursday.

Earlier, Myanmar sealed off all the three entry points with Bangladesh on October 1 after the outbreak of plague in India.

Despite that, the Yangon authorities took back 3,009 refugees in three groups between October 3 and 5 till they decided to suspend the repatriation process.

Bangladesh officials dealing with the refugees, quoting Myanmar officials, said the suspension is temporary.

But they could not make it clear how long would the restriction on the entry from Bangladesh continue.

Some 81,292 Rohingyas have returned home since the repatriation began September 22, 1992.

A total of 1,69,585 refugees are still living in 18 camps in Teknaf.

The Myanmar authorities today refused entry to the Additional Commissioner for Refugee Relief and Repatriation, Raquibuddin Ahmed, when he wanted to discuss the latest situation with his Myanmar counterpart.

On his return to Cox's Bazar, he told reporters that Myanmar side informed him through the UNHCR and the Bangladesh Rifles that they would not allow anybody from Bangladesh to cross the border. But they did not specify how long would this restriction remain in force, he added.

An official of the UNHCR said that although there was no report of any plague case in Bangladesh, the authorities in Myanmar has taken the step as a precautionary measure.

Bangladesh officials said that of late the refugees are quite enthusiastic to return home but the sudden decision of the Myanmar side would slow down the repatriation process.

NEW DELHI, Oct 7: India today reported three more plague deaths, raising to 55 the total nationwide of a three-week outbreak of the mediaeval scourge that sent tremors of panic around of the world, reports Reuters.

A spokeswoman in the control centre monitoring the plague outbreak said the latest three deaths were in the west coast city of Surat, where the first fatality in an eruption of pneumonic plague was reported on September 19.

The new deaths in Surat raised that city's toll to 52.

The centre said there was one other death from plague-like symptoms in the western state of Maharashtra near its border with Gujarat, where Surat lies, but it had not yet been confirmed as a plague death.

Nearly 6,000 people have been rushed to hospital with plague-like symptoms since the outbreak began in Surat, but only 270 tested positive, the plague control centre said.

Although 54 positive cases have been identified in Delhi, where the disease was carried when 300,000 people fled Surat, there has been no death.

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## Embarrassing

DUBLIN, Oct 7: Russian President Boris Yeltsin apologised on Thursday for staying on his aircraft when it arrived in Ireland a week ago, leaving Irish Prime Minister Albert Reynolds on the runway waiting to greet him, reports Reuters.

Russian and Irish officials at Shannon airport tried to hide their embarrassment and said at first Yeltsin, who was on his way back to Russia from the United States, was not well.

When he arrived back in Moscow a smiling Yeltsin told reporters it had all been a mistake and bodyguards had not allowed anyone to wake him.

But British newspapers suggested Yeltsin had been too drunk to disembark.

Reynolds now received a letter from Yeltsin expressing his 'sincere regret' over what happened, officials said.

In his letter, Yeltsin confirmed an invitation to Reynolds to visit Russia.

## Local level AL leaders for talks with BNP

By Staff Correspondent

The local level leaders of the Awami League (AL) yesterday approved the idea of having a dialogue with the ruling party but asserted that no compromise should be made on the Opposition demand for holding general elections under a caretaker government, sources concerned said.

According to an AL press release, presidents and secretaries of 71 district, 407 thana and 64 municipality units of the party attended an extended meeting of the party central working committee in the city yesterday.

AL chief Sheikh Hasina, who chaired the day-long meeting beginning at 9 am, explained the latest political developments including the Commonwealth Secretary General's three-point agenda for a dialogue with the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

Hasina said she had agreed to take part in the Commonwealth leader-proposed dialogue because the agenda contained the AL's demand for a caretaker government.

She, however, advised her partymen not to be misled by any government-sponsored propaganda regarding the dialogue and asked them not to give up agitations aimed at realising the demand for an interim administration to conduct national polls. The current agitations would continue until the demand was met, she added.

Recalling the 'bitter experience' in the past elections under the BNP government, the AL chief said that a non-party caretaker administration was a must to ensure free and fair elections.

The local level leaders of the party, who addressed the

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## Proposals for 7 banks to be placed before cabinet

Star Report

The proposals for setting up seven more banks in the private sector will be placed before the cabinet shortly for its consideration, according to sources concerned.

The cabinet committee on finance and economic affairs has selected seven out of nine applications seeking permission to set up banks.

The cabinet will now take a decision on the matter, the sources said.

As regards the two other proposed banks, the cabinet committee suggested some changes in their character and structure. The two are the Northern Bank and the BRAC Bank.

The cabinet committee said since the BRAC Bank's sponsor is an NGO (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee) and its target group is the rural poor, the sponsor should seek permission to operate it as a specialised bank and not a commercial one. The sponsor should, therefore, apply for registration of the bank, not under the Banking Companies Act but under a 'special arrangement', sources quoted the committee as saying.

In this regard, the committee referred to the Grameen Bank which was given permission to operate under a special ordinance.

The seven banks which got favourable recommendation are: the Prime Bank Ltd, sponsored by M A Khaleq, R A Gani and Lutfar Rahman Sarker; the Bangladesh Social Investment Bank, sponsored by Dr M A Mannan, Islamic Solidarity Fund, Muslim World League and World Assembly of Muslim Youth; the Al Arafat Bank, sponsored by A Z M Shamsul Islam, Ahmed Fazlur Rahman and Mohammad Rezauddin;

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Sri Lankan Prime Minister Chandrika Kumaratunga (L, wearing garlands) is greeted by ministers of her cabinet yesterday shortly after she filed her nomination papers in Colombo to kick off the race for next month's presidential polls. — AFP photo

## Kumaratunga to run for presidency

COLOMBO, Oct 7: Sri Lankan Prime Minister Chandrika Kumaratunga and opposition leader Gamini Dissanayake filed their nomination papers here today to kick off the race for next month's presidential polls, reports AFP.

Election Commissioner Chandrananda De Silva accepted nominations from six candidates, including Kumaratunga from the ruling People's Alliance (PA) and Dissanayake of the main opposition United National Party (UNP).

Nominations were also received from former UNP legislators Arthur Ranasinghe and Hudson Samarasinghe, both of whom are standing as independent candidates for the November 9 polls.

## Dhaka for intensifying South-South cooperation

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman Thursday called for the intensification of South-South cooperation and reactivation of North-South dialogue to solve the problems facing the world as absence of peace remains a 'continuing reality', reports BSS.

In his statement at the 49th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) Mostafiz said Bangladesh remains fully committed to the United Nations and considers it as the only forum capable of dealing with the cooperative management of the world's problems where all the nations can together successfully confront and meet the challenges of the future.

Although a new light of hope could be seen dawning in South Africa, the Middle East and Cambodia, he said, too often people across the world were witnessing newer faces of despair and brutalisation in the post cold war world.

On the positive side, he said, ideological walls have tumbled, democracy has spread worldwide, more caring and responsible governments have come into power and economic empowerment and social imperatives have lessened reliance on the military culture.

Yet, he said, negative impulses challenge everywhere, peace and security, human

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## Madhyapara Rock Project works begin Oct 20

Bangladesh will start development of the 'Madhyapara' Hard Rock Project under the technical and financial assistance from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from October 20, the DPKK Ambassador in Bangladesh Chong Yon Sik has said. He said a high-power delegation from his country will come to Dhaka for the purpose, reports BSS.

Sik in a statement described the 'Madhyapara' project as a testimony of growing cooperation between the two countries and said this project is a reflection of friendship between the two brotherly peoples. Economically, he said, both the countries are expanding cooperation in several fields and added that other projects are under discussions now.

The ambassador mentioned about the 49th founding anniversary of the Korean

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## 7th grade scale of 14 BCS cadres upgraded

By Staff Correspondent

The seventh grade scale of 14 cadres of the Bangladesh Civil Services (BCS) have been promoted to the sixth grade scale yesterday, says a government handout.

Following the change, the basic pay scale will increase to Tk 4800 — Tk 7250 from Tk 4100 — Tk 6500/-.

The 14 cadres are Health, Agriculture, Forest, Roads and Highway, Works, Public Health and Engineering, Telecom, Railway Engineering, Administration, Police, Livestock, Information, Food and Ansar.

## Twin murder Autopsy shows use of similar weapons

By Staff Correspondent

The bodies of both Nilufar Chowdhury and her daughter Mahjabeen Chowdhury Shoma carried marks of severe wounds and lacerations by sharp weapons of similar nature, according to the autopsy reports sent to the investigating police by the Forensic Medicine experts of the Dhaka Medical College yesterday.

The reports also said, Shoma's body carried wound signs of self-defence including bruises which seemingly were suffered during a scuffle with her assailants. However, there were no signs of rape or any attempted rape on the body, the reports added. The body of Nilufar did not carry such marks of self-defence.

According to the forensic experts, both the murders were committed almost at the same time. The girl, according to the report, seemed to have been murdered first.

The assailants slit a part of the neck of Shoma severing the veins and arteries which caused her death while the mother was brutally hacked almost all over the body.

Nilufar Chowdhury, 50, and her daughter Shoma, 20, were hacked to death allegedly by their maid Romena, 30, at their Lalmitia residence in the city Sunday last.

Romena also confessed to murdering both the mother and daughter with a bottle, a kitchen knife.

## Vehicles damaged over death of 2 in Cox's Bazar

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, Oct 7: Agitated people damaged several vehicles here today after a bus ran over and killed a school boy and a worker.

The bus coming from Teknaf smashed a rickshaw carrying Ershadul Huq and Meher Ali at Tarabouni Chhara area of the town. Ershadul Huq, 13, was a student of Cox's Bazar Preparatory School.

The driver fled the spot.

Soon after the accident, a group of people brought out a procession in the town demanding immediate arrest of the driver. At one stage, they damaged at least five buses. Three people were injured in the incident.

Traffic movement in the town came to a halt for about three hours.

Bus services between Cox's Bazar and Teknaf remained suspended till date tonight.

## Five beheaded in Riyadh

RIYADH, Oct 7: Five convicted drug smugglers — three Pakistanis and two Afghans — were beheaded Friday, the Interior Ministry announced. The Pakistanis were identified as Shaaban Ali Mohammed Ramadan, Shah Aidul Zaman Nokai and Ahmed Munir Talkon Wadio, and the Afghans as Naeibullah Abdul-Wahed and Khan Agha Haji Gholam Nabi, reports AP.

## Seven killed in Lucknow blast

LUCKNOW, Oct 7: Seven casual labourers were killed when an explosion ripped through the truck in which they were travelling in Obra town in Mirzapur district late yesterday, according to official reports here today reports PTI.