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NEWS BRIEFS

Labour leader shot dead in Khulna
From Our Correspondent

KHULNA, Oct 10: Mouze Ali, 35, a labour leader of Boyra CSD godown, was shot dead at Noornagar under Khalishpur thana this evening. According to police, some unknown assailants attacked him and his supporters with arms and hand bombs in which he died instantly. At least seven others were injured.

Gulistan Hawkers Market ransacked

At least 10 people were injured when hoodlums fired shots, blasted crackers and looted shops at Gulistan Hawkers Market yesterday. Shopkeepers and police said. They said a group of 'mastans', who were earlier refused tolls, attacked the market at about 9:30 am, ransacked 10 shops and snatched cash and valuables. The shopkeepers estimated that the mastans took away cash Taka 10 lakh and damaged or looted property worth over Tk 50 lakh, reports UNB.

Arms recovered in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Oct 10: The detective branch of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) in separate drives recovered two pistols, three cartridges and two rounds of bullet from two places of the city last night. One person was arrested in this connection, reports BSS.

Bandit kills 5 in Tamil Nadu

NEW DELHI, Oct 10: Five people were hacked and shot to death in southern India by the country's most-wanted bandit who has been described as a 'menace to humans, wildlife and the environment', the Press Trust of India (PTI) said. The outlaw, Veerappan, and his men killed their victims late Saturday and hung their bodies from trees in the Periyar jungles of Tamil Nadu state after the tribes people reportedly refused to feed him. PTI said, reports AFP.

Salam Talukder tells press

Term of Anti-Terrorism Act won't be extended

By Staff Correspondent

The ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party has decided that the two-year term of the Anti-Terrorism Act will not be extended on its expiry November 5. BNP Secretary General Salam Talukder announced yesterday.

"The law and order has considerably improved during the past two years because of proper application of the law. So it has been decided that its term will not be extended," the BNP leader and LGD minister told a press conference at the party central office.

Sub-Clause 1(2) of the Act stated that if not renewed, the law will not be in force after two years.

Salam Talukder said that promulgation of such a law had become necessary in 1992 when the rate of crime soared

as the upshot of nine-year autocratic rule.

"The criminals and anti-social elements were scared about the tough provisions of the law, which helped bring down the crime rate," said Talukder, flanked by Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury and Information Minister Nazmul Huda. The press conference was also attended by BNP leaders Labour Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Telecommunication Minister Tariqul Islam and Energy Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain.

Salam Talukder said till September 15, 1994, some 1,394 cases were filed under the law and 3,358 accused were arrested. A total of 896 accused in 309 cases were convicted by different tri-

bunals, he added.

He said that currently 420 cases were under trial and these would continue until final verdicts as per provision of the law.

The law, initially an ordinance promulgated by the President on September 15, 1992 was later enacted by Parliament November 6, '92.

In reply to a question whether there is any political motive behind the decision, Salam Talukder said "If the decision creates a soothing effect on the present situation, then there will obviously be some political implications of this decision."

He told another questioner the date of the proposed dialogue with Oppositions will be finalised after the arrival of

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No plan to scrap 'Special Powers Act'

BNP secretary general Barister Abdus Salam Talukder said the Special Powers Act (SPA) of 1974 is still needed, saying that the government has no plan to scrap it, reports UNB.

"Certainly it (SPA) is required and that's why it is yet to be annulled," he said in reply to queries from reporters on the controversial law at a press conference at the BNP office yesterday afternoon.

He parried a question on whether the BNP did not consider SPA as a black law and disagreed with a questioner that the scrapping of SPA was one of the election promises of the BNP.

Salam said annulment of the SPA would depend on the need for doing so.

Being pressed that it was envisaged in BNP's election manifesto, he said, "We are yet to implement our entire manifesto."

AL, Jamaat welcome BNP decision

By Staff Correspondent

The major opposition parties, especially the Awami League (AL) and the Jamaat-e-Islami, yesterday welcomed the ruling party's decision not to seek extension of the tenure of the Anti-Terrorism Act after it expires on November 5.

The parties, however, said that the government was compelled to accept the people's demand regarding the 'controversial law'.

AL general secretary Zillur Rahman giving his reaction to the ruling party announcement yesterday, told The Daily Star "It seems good sense has prevailed upon 'the government leaders'. The opposition parties were against the black law since its enactment in 1992. The government has been compelled not to seek further extension of the tenure

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Advanced team for dialogue arrives

The Commonwealth-brokered political dialogue is likely to start on October 15, government and Opposition sources indicated, reports UNB.

An advanced team of the Commonwealth Secretary General's envoy, comprising Dr Anafu and Christopher Childs arrived in the city yesterday afternoon by a Singapore Airlines flight.

Sir Ninian Stephen, the envoy of the Commonwealth Secretary General, is scheduled to arrive in Dhaka on Thursday to mediate the dialogue in a bid to end the current political crisis stemming from the Opposition demand for a neutral caretaker government to conduct national polls.

"If it is not on 14th, the dialogue will start on the 15th," said a BNP source.

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S M Sultan dead

By Staff Correspondent

S M Sultan passed away yesterday, leaving behind his immortal paintings depicting life and the indomitable human spirit.

The doyen of Bangladesh's painting world, Sultan breathed his last at 4:35pm at the Jessore Combined Military Hospital (CMH). He was 70.

Our Jessore Correspondent reported that the eminent artist was admitted to the Jessore district hospital Friday afternoon with acute asthma and other respiratory complications.

He was later shifted to the CMH as his condition deteriorated.

Despite all possible medical attention, his condition continued to worsen. A five-member Medical Board was formed for him.

A helicopter was kept ready to shift him to Dhaka.

Since his physical condition did not permit any movement,

Chief Surgeon at the CMH, Dhaka, Colonel Jafar Ullah Siddiqui was flown to Jessore.

Acting Director General of Medical Services and Consultant Surgeon Major General M A Mohaimen and Consultant Physician Brigadier Zia Uddin Ahmed were also flown from Dhaka to attend Sultan.

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Life sketch

By Staff Correspondent

Born in village Machimda in Narail district on August 10, 1923, Sheikh Muhammad Sultan had his early education at the Narail Victoria Collegiate School.

His father Sheikh Meser was a mason who was well-known in his area for his work.

Nicknamed Lal Mia, Sultan's debut as a painter took place in his school at the age of 10 while he was casually doing a

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Merchant Bankers Regulation soon

Financial intermediaries in the country's capital market will soon have to follow a set of regulations, reports UNB.

At present, there are no specific regulations to guide the intermediaries in the share market, who usually function as portfolio and issue managers as well as underwriters.

Until now, the intermediary functions are being carried out even without licence. But the upcoming regulation will make it mandatory for them to have a licence from the Securities Exchange Commission (SEC).

According to sources at the SEC, capital adequacy of the intermediaries and their technical expertise have specially been looked into in the proposed regulation to be known as 'Merchant Bankers Regulation'.

A comprehensive code of conduct for the intermediary companies have also been formulated, they said.

Financial intermediaries in the share markets are usually called 'merchant banks' in different countries.

In Bangladesh, eight newly floated securities companies, several banks, insurance companies, Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB) and also a good number of DSE (Dhaka Stock Exchange) members are functioning as merchant banks.

Minimum capital adequacy of the intermediary functionaries has been proposed to be fixed at a minimum of one crore taka if they are to underwrite any new issues.

Capital adequacy of underwriters are essential to safe-

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New newspapers have to buy imported newsprint

Three thousand metric tons of newsprint — 75 per cent of the monthly domestic production — will be earmarked for the newspapers, reports UNB.

Newspapers to be published in future would have to meet their requirements of newsprint through private sector import.

The decision came from an inter-ministerial meeting held yesterday with Information Minister Barister Nazmul Huda in the chair.

The meeting was informed that there was a shortage of newsprint in the country due to rising number of dailies, weeklies, fortnightly and monthly newspapers, and increasing activities in the publication sector. Implementation of expanding education programme and ban on government import of newsprint.

It was also informed that the production capacity of the only newsprint mill in the

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Two killed in city clashes

By DMCH Correspondent

Two youngmen were murdered in the city's East Jurain and Mirpur areas in separate incidents yesterday.

Mamun, 25, was shot dead in a cross firing between two groups of local bullies at East Jurain yesterday evening. A bus driver, Razzak, 30, who was stabbed Sunday evening at Mirpur, succumbed to his injuries at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) at 10 in the morning yesterday.

Witnesses said, two rival groups were locked in a fierce clash at Jurain around 5:30 pm leaving Mamun killed and ten others injured.

He died on way to the DMCH.

Of the injured, Sultan, a businessman, underwent a surgery at the DMCH last night. The two groups fired gunshots and exploded crackers while chasing each other for over an hour.

The bus driver, Mohammad

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Ershad to reappoint lawyers

Deposed president Hussain Muhammad Ershad, who only two months ago withdrew lawyers from all cases, has decided to reappoint counsels to defend him in a number of cases — most of which are related to corruption or misuse of his official position, reports BSS.

Ershad told this to the First Additional Sessions Judge Jinat Ara yesterday during the hearing of special case No 50 of 1993 in the city. The case is known as Jatiya Party offence case.

Ershad, former works minister Mostafiz Jamal Haider and former acting works secretary M A Rouf are accused in this case.

When asked by judge Jinat Ara whether he would cross examine prosecution witness-4, the former president prayed

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LDF calls countrywide hartal Nov 10

The Left Democratic Front (LDF) has called for a countrywide half-day hartal on November 10 to press for their 7-point demands, including the caretaker government issue, reports UNB.

The LDF, an alliance of eight left-leaning parties, will also stage a sit-in near the Bangladesh Secretariat on October 22.

The programmes were announced by Bimal Biswas, coordinator of LDF, from a rally held at Nur Hossain Square here yesterday.

Declaring the programmes, Bimal Biswas criticised political behaviour of the ruling BNP, opposition Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami. "The bankruptcy of these parties have jeopardised the country's independence," he added.

On the question of a caretaker government, the political hollowiness of the four parties resulted in foreign interference into the country's internal politics, declaration read out at the rally said.

The declaration expressed firm determination of the LDF

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Export earning falls short of target

By S Y Bakht

The total export earnings during the first two months of the current fiscal year declined by 5.77 per cent to 432.57 million US dollars compared to 459.04 million dollars in the same period of 1993-94.

According to the export figures released this week by the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), the value of exports during July and August was also 25.84 per cent lower than the projected target of 583.33 million dollars for the period.

Key sectors like ready-made garments (RMG), tea, raw jute and handicraft marked a sharp decline in export earnings. This is for the first time in the last few years that the country's export volume showed such a downward trend and both official and business cir-

cles have expressed their concern about this alarming trend. Official figures indicate that the total export of 2533.90 million dollars in 1993-94 was 6.34 per cent higher than the 2368.89 million dollars of 1992-93, although the amount fell short of the annual target by 12.62 per cent.

The export target for the current fiscal year was set at 3,500 million dollars — 415 million in primary commodities and 3,085 million in industrial commodities — in the export policy for 1993-95, which unveiled the government's ambitious export-led growth strategy in 1993.

The significant aspect of the current trend of decline is that the export of industrial commodities fell by 7.24 per

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KCC female commissioners' polls today

From Our Correspondent

KHULNA, Oct 10: The election of six female ward commissioners to Khulna City Corporation (KCC) will be held tomorrow.

According to the returning officer, polling will begin at 10 am and continue till 4 pm.

Sixteen candidates are contesting for six seats. Both the ruling party and the combined opposition groups have fielded candidates in each of the six constituencies.

There will be straight fight between BNP and the opposition in four of the six seats. The other two seats have four contestants each. There are two independent candidates in two seats, who are being described as BNP supporters.

The KCC mayor and 31 elected ward commissioners will elect six female commissioners.

Durga Puja begins

By Staff Correspondent

The five-day Durga Puja, the greatest festival of the Hindu community, began throughout the country yesterday with traditional enthusiasm and religious fervour.

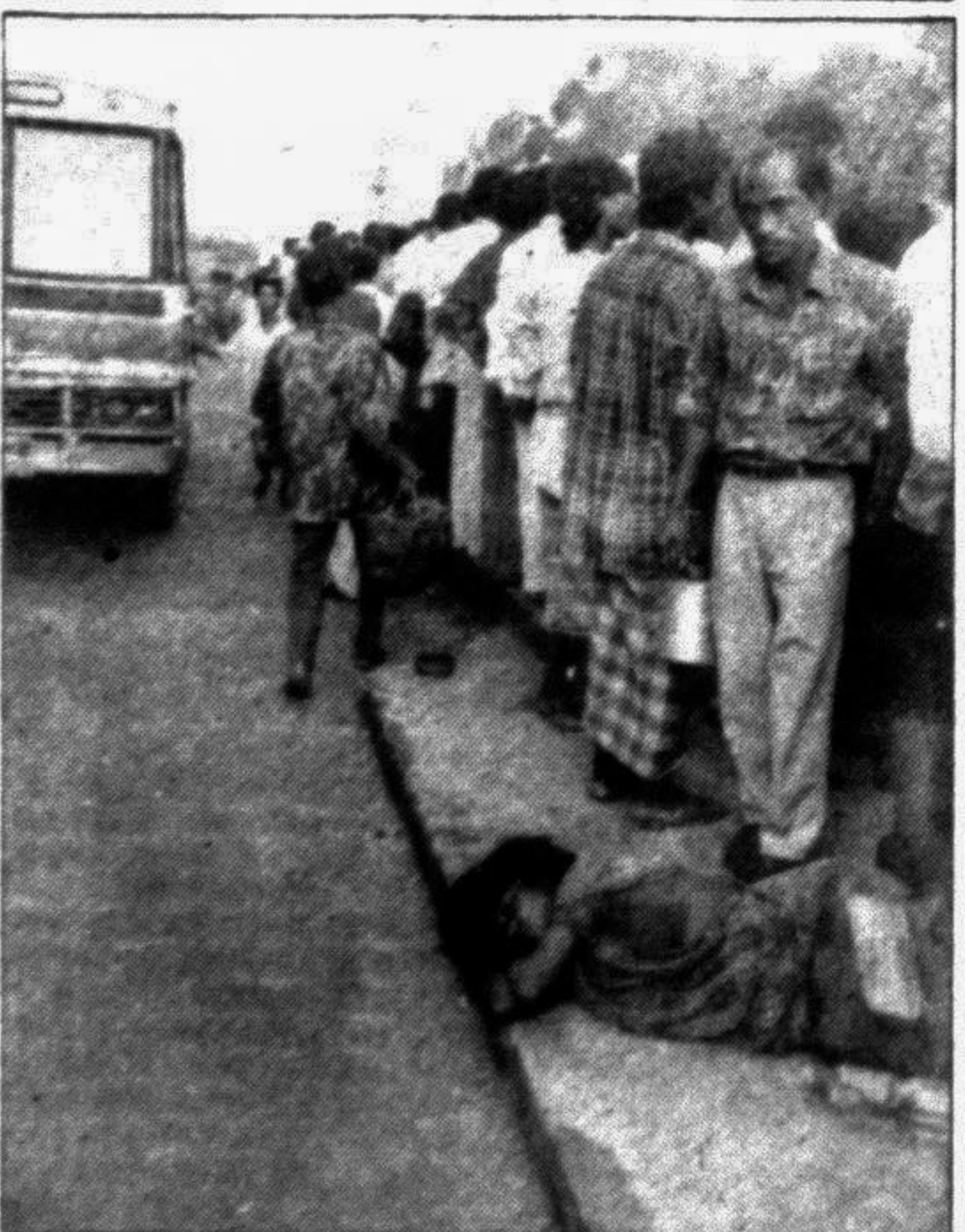
On the first day, members of the Hindu community invoked the goddess Durga by unveiling the cover of the idol erected in about 100 pandels in the capital and in 10,000 to 12,000 pandels all over the country.

The five-day Sharadiya Durgasav will culminate with the immersion of the images of goddess Durga on the Dashami, the last day of the festival on Friday.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, the Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina and the State Minister for Environment and Forests Goyeshwar Roy in separate messages yesterday congratulated the members of the Hindu community on the occasion of the Durga Puja.

In Narayanganj the five-day long Durga Puja began yesterday amid great enthusiasm.

A total of 74 puja mandaps



A mentally unsound woman lying on the pavement of a city street yesterday as the World Mental Health Day was observed in the country.

—Star photo