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Emergency: Indefinite curfew: Peace talks suspended

Blast kills Lankan Opposition's president candidate, 56 others

COLOMBO, Oct 24: The government suspended peace talks with Tamil rebels today and gave the army sweeping law-and-order powers after a suicide bomber killed the Opposition candidate for president and about 56 more people, reports AP.

The killing of Gamini Dissanayake, 52, less than three weeks before the election cast doubt over the future of the peace process begun earlier this month to end the 11-year civil war.

More than 34,000 people have died in the conflict, including hundreds who were killed in bombings attributed to an elite corps of suicide commandos of the Tamil Tiger guerrillas.

Dissanayake was critical of the peace talks that were launched after his United National Party, which had governed for 17 years, was ousted in parliamentary elections in August. He told a news conference

The blast killed him and at least three top leaders of his party and sprayed lethal metal pellets into the crowd.

Among the dead was the General Secretary of Dissanayake's United National Party (UNP), Dr. Gamini Wijesekara and a former minister Weerasinghe Mallimarachchi, as well as another key party figure GM Premachandra.

All four men were Opposition members in the Sri Lankan parliament.

Investigators found the severed head of a woman on the roof of a building about 30 meters from the stage.

The head could be the head of the killer. We aren't certain yet, but there are many similarities with previous suicide bombings," said Yogan Mahesan, head of the government's forensic department.

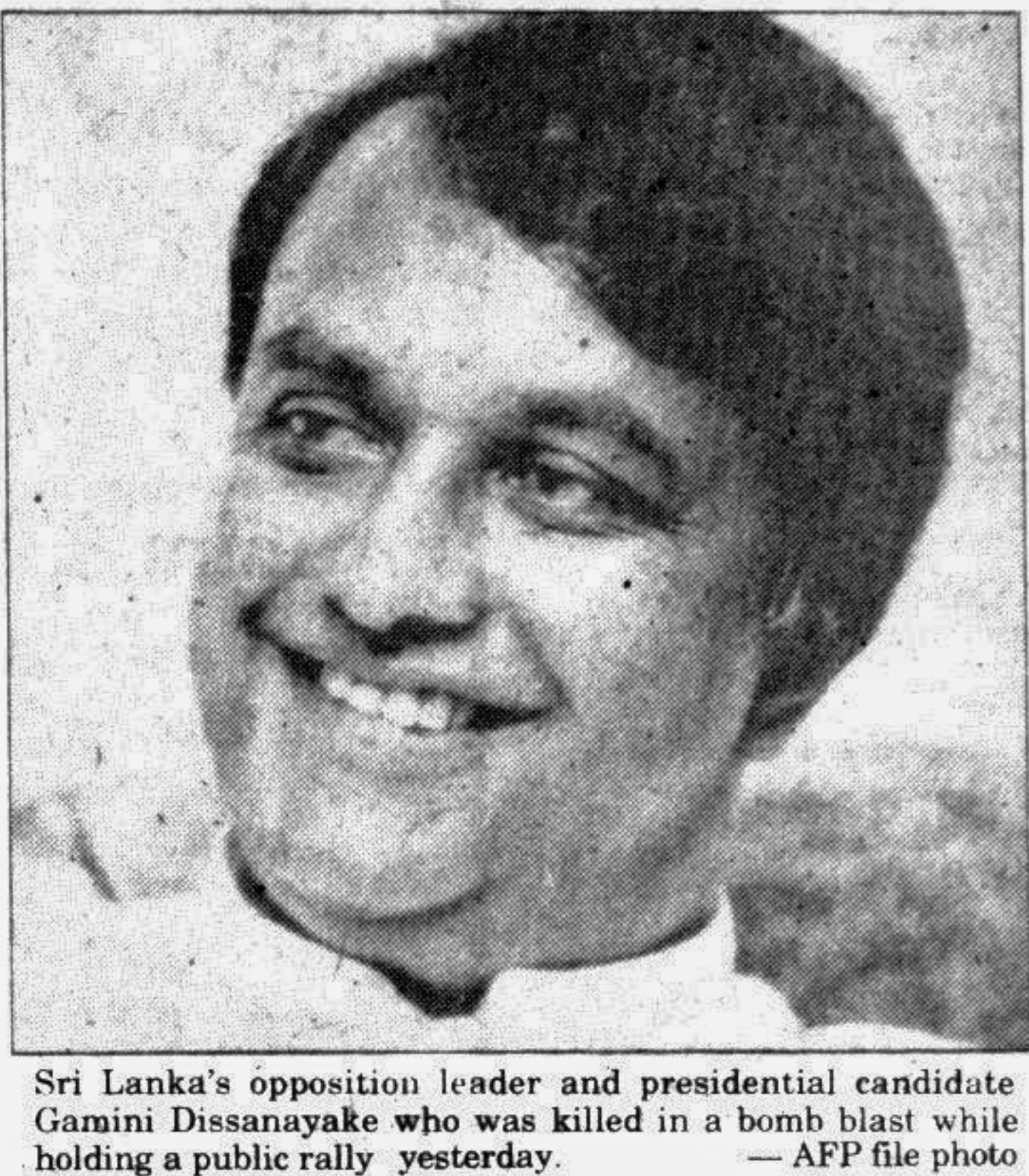
In 1991, former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was held a public rally yesterday.

— AFP file photo

Khaleda, Hasina shocked

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina condemned the assassination of Gamini Dissanayake, Leader of the Opposition in Sri Lankan Parliament, in a suicide bomb attack Sunday night, reports UNB.

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Sri Lanka's opposition leader and presidential candidate Gamini Dissanayake who was killed in a bomb blast while holding a public rally yesterday.

Abahani's double delight

Sports Reporter

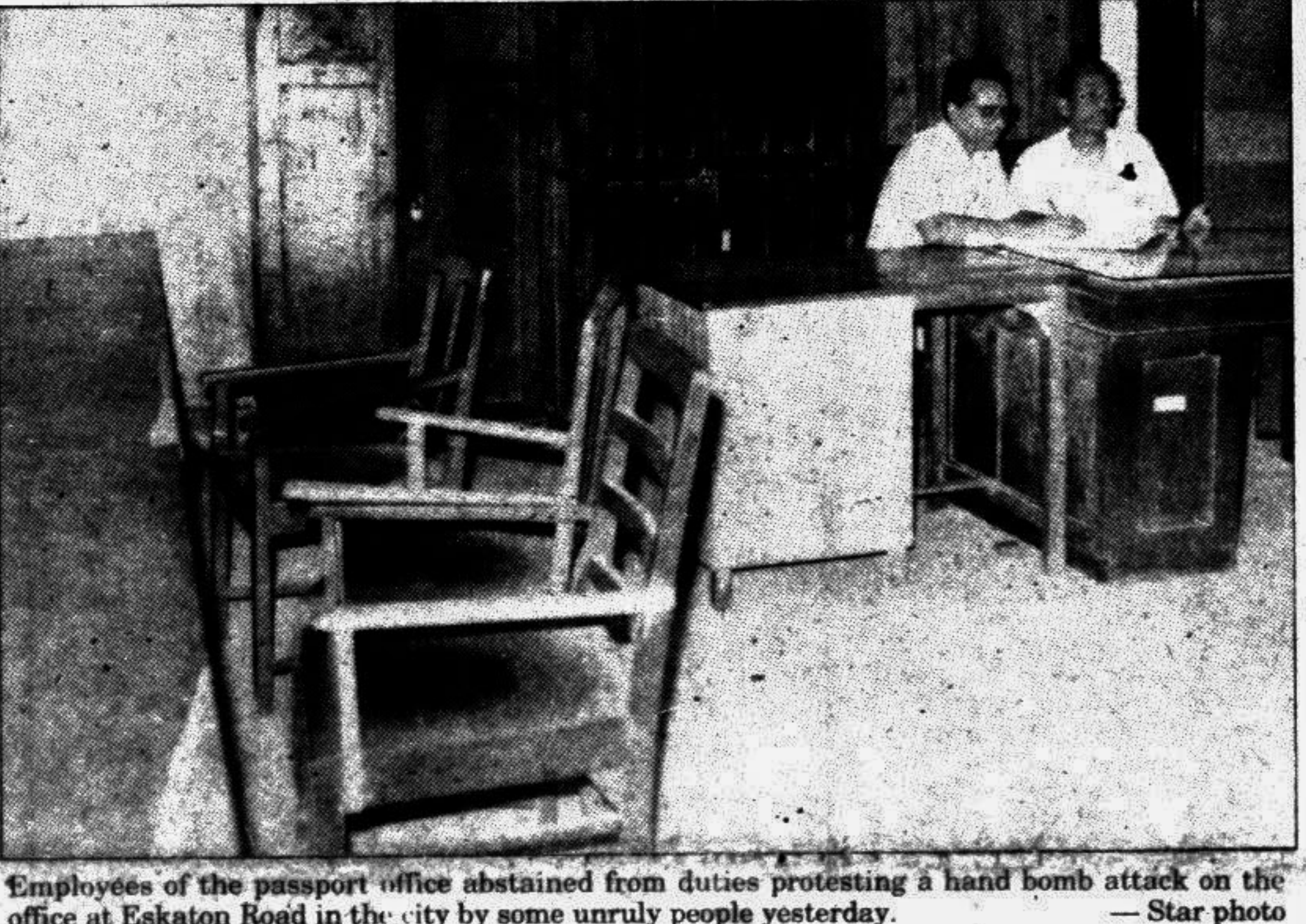
Winners take it all. Abahani Krira Chakra celebrated their ninth Senior Division league crown in style when they held off arch-rivals Mohammedans go at their unbeaten status successfully in the traditional

Match report on page 10.

clash of the Titans of local football at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

The concluding tie of this year's Star Premier league between the new and former champions ended in a one-all draw, pushing Mohammedans to the third place behind star-studded Muktiyoddha Sangsad Krira Chakra who, for all their pre-season drama in roping almost all the national footballers lured away from other big clubs, managed only the runner-up.

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Employees of the passport office abstained from duties protesting a hand bomb attack on the office at Eskaton Road in the city by some unruly people yesterday.

Agitation if dialogue fails, says Hasina

Leader of the Opposition and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina has said, the demand for a caretaker government to hold national polls will be realised through agitation if the dialogue fails, reports UNB.

"No agitation ever failed in this country. And in future none of our agitations will fail. Even if the dialogue fails, our agitation will surely be successful and the government will have to meet our demand," she said.

Talking to a group of journalists on board her launch while she was returning to Dhaka after a three-day tour of the southern districts, Hasina said, "I am 100 per cent hopeful that the dialogue will be successful if the government

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BNP standing body reviews situation

By Staff Correspondent

An emergency meeting of the ruling BNP's Standing Committee yesterday discussed the latest political situation in the country.

According to meeting sources, those members of the Standing Committee representing the government in the current dialogue with the parliamentary Opposition—apprised Prime Minister and BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia of the tone and tenor of the talks held so far.

The meeting, held in the afternoon at the PM's Hare Road office, also discussed at length certain recent newspaper reports claiming that the donors and diplomatic circles here were in favour of suggesting an interim administration, in line with last year's polls in Pakistan, to conduct

future national elections should the present talks fail.

The meeting agreed that there was no substance to the stories and observed that such reports would hinder the process.

See Page 12 Col 1

Cabinet approves Suppression of Terrorism Ord'n '94

The Cabinet yesterday approved the Suppression of Terrorism (Amendment) Ordinance 1994 to make provision for trial of the pending cases under the Anti-Terrorism Act after its expiry.

The Suppression of Terrorism Act, enacted for a two-year period to deal with a menacing rise in terrorist activity, expires on November 5.

The Suppression of Terrorism (Amendment) Ordinance 1994 provides for trial of the cases pending for trial or against which chargesheets have been or will be submitted under the same act before its expiry.

The approval was given at the regular weekly meeting of the Cabinet held at Bangabhaban with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair.

Court declines to referee Babri Mosque dispute

NEW DELHI, Oct 24: In a landmark verdict, India's Supreme Court Monday declined to arbitrate over a Hindu claim on the fallen Babri Mosque in Ayodhya and handed the disputed site over to the federal government, reports AFP.

A five-judge bench delivered the 3-2 majority verdict declining Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao's request to referee the dispute which arose from the destruction of the 16th century mosque by Hindu zealots in December 1992, sparking a wave of Hindu-Muslim riots.

"The special reference made by the President is superfluous and unnecessary and does not need to be answered," the verdict said.

"The unanimous view... is that the Ayodhya dispute had already raised a religious storm and the dignity and honour of the court would be compromised if it were to answer the

single point reference (of the President)," it added.

The court handed over to the government the 67-acre (28-hectare) plot of land which Hindu fundamentalists want to use for a temple to the Lord Rama.

A makeshift temple built by Hindu militants on the Babri

AYODHYA, Oct 24: Some 2000 paramilitary troops poured into the town to avert a possible violence following the court's verdict today, reports AFP.

Mosque ruins would, however, remain untouched, the court said.

The judgement was a setback both to government hopes for a judicial solution to the dispute and to the Hindu campaign for a temple on the site, legal experts said.

"Now the Hindu fundamentalists cannot build a temple on the 67 acres because the site has been handed over to the federal government which

Khulna clash Another student succumbs to injuries

From Our Correspondent

KHULNA, Oct 24: Abu Saeed Khan, 22, a third-year student of MM City College, who was injured during yesterday's gunbattle between two rival groups, died mid-night last night.

He was being brought to Dhaka for treatment.

Saeed is the second victim of the gunfight. Abul Kashem Pathan was the other student shot dead in yesterday's clash.

Rivals pro-Jamaat Islami Chhatra Shibir and pro-BNP JCD brought out processions in the city today, held meetings and called a half-day hartal tomorrow protesting the killings.

Earlier namaz-e-janaza of Pathan was held twice this morning and he was buried at the city's Basupara graveyard. The body of Taru was buried at his village home at Khatrabad under Botaiyaga Police Station of the district.

'Bangladesh can have a huge market in India'

By Staff Correspondent

The newly elected President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) Salman F Rahman has said the local exporters should consider India as a huge market for Bangladesh products.

If countries like Mexico and Canada, under NAFTA, can get a huge market in the US despite their weaker economic base, why cannot Bangladesh have a big market in India, he asked.

Salman was addressing a press conference after taking over the responsibilities from outgoing President Mahbubur Rahman at the annual general meeting of the FBCCI held at the Federation Bhaban in the city yesterday.

"We will have to approach India for giving us easy access to its market," he said, adding India will have to give the access, today or tomorrow, since it is one of the signatories to GATT.

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Student found murdered in city

By Staff Correspondent

Another student was found murdered near his home in the city's Bangsal area last night.

Shumon, 18, son of a businessman Din Mohammad was found dead with black scars on his throat and some bruises on the body near his home at 521 Haji Abdur Rashid Lane, Bangsal, around 9 last night.

Shumon appeared in the HSC examinations from the Dr. Maleka Science College this year.

He was rushed to the Mitford Hospital by some local people where the doctors confirmed his death.

It is believed to be strangulated to death by some local bullies because of envy.

The body was sent to the Mitford Hospital morgue for autopsy. No arrest was made until midnight last night.

Bosnia begins to withdraw from demilitarised zone

SARAJEVO, Oct 24: Bosnian government forces began to withdraw from a demilitarised zone outside Sarajevo today, clearing the way for the Bosnian Serb army to end a fuel blockade of UN peacekeepers, reports Reuters.

The first of the 500 men deployed by Muslim-led government forces began to leave the slopes of mount Igman, west of the Bosnian capital, at noon.

The evacuation was part of a maze of interlocking demands on the UN by both Muslims and Serbs which are crippling efforts to aid and defend civilians in Bosnia.

In weekend negotiations the Bosnian Serbs said renewed fuel supplies for the UN protection force (UNPROFOR) depended on the Igman withdrawal.

The Bosnian government threatened to stay on Igman until the UN stopped the Bosnian Serbs firing on its only access road to Sarajevo which crosses the mountain.

The Bosnian Serbs army an-

gered the UN by reneging on a promise that fuel convoys would be allowed to traverse Serb soil to Sarajevo and three Muslim safe havens in eastern Bosnia this morning.

Permission for 11 convoys was refused and a UN spokesman said UN special envoy Yasushi Akashi would protest to Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic "to express his outrage and demand immediate clearance."

"It's quite clear (the Serbs) are trying to interfere with our operations," UNPROFOR official Tim Spicer said.

UN forces in the eastern enclave of Gorazde are already out of fuel and unable to carry out their security council mandate to protect it, the situation in nearby Zepa is similar.

Spicer said the Gorazde units had only enough fuel in reserve to withdraw from the town in an emergency.

The fuel blockade goes hand in hand with the Serbs' systematic disruption of the

Tributes paid to S M Ali

By Staff Correspondent

Classmates, colleagues, friends and admirers at a memorial meeting in the city yesterday described S M Ali as a titan among Bangladeshi journalists.

Journalists and staff of The Daily Star organised the meeting at the Jatiya Press Club on the occasion of the first anniversary of the death of Ali, founder-editor of the newspaper.

Ali's widow, Nancy Ali, attended the function as chief guest while The Daily Star editor, Mahfuz Anam presided over the meeting.

The crammed VIP lounge of the Press Club heard speakers recalling personal anecdotes involving the great columnist-editor and paying eloquent tributes to him for his remarkable qualities of head and heart and as a journalist.

They also lauded the late journalist's independent views and analytical interpretation of many important issues in South and Far East Asia.

Professor Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, a classmate of S M Ali

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The non-gazetted government employees yesterday held a rally in the Secretariat premises to press home their 14-point demand which includes pay rise.

Isha murder: Amjad sent to jail

By Staff Correspondent

Amjad Hossain alias Amjad Chowdhury, one of the five accused in the city's school boy murder case told a Magistrate yesterday that he did not know his four other friends would murder Ishiaq Ahmed Isha.

Amjad was produced in the Dhaka magistracy for his confessional statement in which he said he was briefed by four accomplices that they would only commit a robbery in Isha's flat at Elyseum government rest house at Hatkhola Wednesday.

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Flights to India resume Oct 30

Biman flights in the Dhaka-Calcutta-Dhaka, Chittagong-Calcutta-Chittagong and London-Delhi-Dhaka routes will resume on October 30, an official announcement said yesterday, reports UNB.

This was decided at the 12th meeting on National Plague Prevention Committee held at the EPI Bhaban with Health and Family Welfare Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf in the chair.

The flights were suspended on October 1 in the wake of the outbreak of plague in India.