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NEWS BRIEFS

President goes to Bagerhat today

President Abdur Rahman Biswas will pay a visit to Bagerhat today and lay the foundation stone of the district bar library there. He will meet local leaders, government officials and elite of the town at the local circuit house. President Biswas will also visit the mazar of Hazrat Khan Jahan Ali and offer foteha there, reports BBS.

Hasina shocked

Awami League president and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina has expressed profound shock at the tragic demise of Dr Sirajul Haq MP in a road accident Friday. In a condolence message, Hasina conveyed her heartfelt sympathy to the members of the bereaved family and prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul, reports UNB.

Saudi flights to India resume

RIYADH (Saudi Arabia), Oct 29: Saudia Airlines resumed flights Saturday to India, a month after the kingdom suspended operations following an outbreak of pneumonic plague on the subcontinent, airline officials reported. The national carrier will operate extra flights to cope with the backlog of passengers, stranded here and in India since the cut in air links September 28, officials said, reports AP.

1236 more Rohingyas go home

From Our Correspondent
COX'S BAZAR, Oct 29: Some 1236 Rohingyas refugees comprising 239 families from different camps of Cox's Bazar returned to Myanmar voluntarily today. With their repatriation, the total number of Rohingyas who returned home stands at 88,847.

BNP proposes nat'l govt before next elections

Star Report

The ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) is learnt to have put forward a proposal to the Opposition for holding the next general elections under a broad-based national government headed by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

The proposal was made by the four-man government delegation at yesterday's session of the ongoing dialogue with

the Opposition at the state guest house Meghna.

The three-member Opposition delegation at the talks reportedly sought time to study the proposal and discuss the issue with other opposition allies.

Leaders of the opposition parties and groups are scheduled to meet at 11:00 this morning at the Sangsad Bhaban.

The talks yesterday lasted three and a half hours and was adjourned at 7:30 pm indefinitely.

The Commonwealth Secretary General's emissary, Sir Ninian Stephen, was present at the meeting.

The ruling party delegation,

headed by Deputy Leader of Parliament Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury, comprised Chief Whip of Parliament Khandaker Delwar Hossain, party Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukder and Communications Minister Colonel (Retd) Oli Ahmed.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the House Abdus Samad Azad led the team consisting of Chief Whip Opposition Mohammad Nasim and S A M S Kibria, political adviser to Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina.

Sources close to the leaders who attended yesterday's meeting said, the ruling party delegation in its 'alternative pro-

posals' under certain constitutional provision suggested a 'nine-member mini cabinet', comprising members both from the ruling party and the Opposition in Parliament, to conduct the general elections.

According to the proposal, the mini cabinet will consist of five members from the ruling party and four from the parliamentary opposition. Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will head it.

A top leader of the BNP told The Daily Star that the proposal was made in the light of Article 56(4) of the Constitution. The article reads: "On occasion arises for making any

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Alarming fall in garments export

Star Report

The country's ready-made garments sector is reeling under serious problems as a declining trend in export earnings has set in since last year.

According to Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) figures, earnings from the ready-made garments (RMG) exports dropped by 24.11 per cent during July and August of the current fiscal year compared to the corresponding period of 1993-94.

Export earnings from the sector stood at only 192.52 million US dollars, against a target of 341.67 million, during the period. It was 253.69 million dollars in July-August of the last fiscal year.

"The rapid decline in export earnings from the RMG sector will continue unless the

government initiates immediate steps to solve the problems plaguing the sector," cautioned Redwan Ahmed, MP, President of the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters' Association (BGMEA).

He pointed out that nearly 40 per cent of the 1,930 member factories of BGMEA have been turned into sick units because of faulty government policies.

The EPB noted that the average export unit price and the export volume declined by 9.05 per cent and 16.58 per cent respectively during the first two months of 1994-95.

In 1993-94 export earnings from the sector, which accounts for some 60 per cent of

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EC may announce Tariqul's election as MP today

By Staff Correspondent

Technocrat minister Tariqul Islam is likely to be declared elected unopposed to the Jessore-3 Jatiya Sangsad seat after the deadline for withdrawal of candidature expires at 5 pm today, according to Election Commission sources.

The Returning Officer for the by-election is expected to make an unofficial announcement of Tariqul's election as an MP since no other candidate has contested the JS seat which fell vacant following the death last August of Rawshan Ali of the Awami League.

According to the schedule, voting for the by-election was to be held November 15.

Tariqul Islam, the Minister for Telecommunications, lost the 1991 parliamentary elections for the Jessore-3 constituency. He had appealed to the election tribunal seeking cancellation of the election results because of alleged rigging by the AL during vote counting. But on October 22 the tribunal dismissed his appeal.

The last date for filing nominations for the by-election expired the same day and only one nomination was filed—that of Tariqul.

Sirajul Haq MP buried

From Our Correspondent

SHERPUR, Oct 29: Dr Sirajul Haq, BNP Member of Parliament from Sherpur-3 constituency, was buried at his family graveyard at Halgora village of Sreebordi thana.

Dr Haq was killed in a road accident at Churkhabazar on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway Friday.

Earlier, his namaz-e-janaza was held at the Sherpur Pura Park in the morning. Another janaza was held at the Mymensingh Medical College premises yesterday evening.

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The newly-elected office-bearers of the FBCCI, led by its President Salman F Rahman called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday. Industries Minister A M Zahiruddin Khan and Commerce Minister M Shamsul Islam were present.

PM seeks FBCCI's help to raise investments

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday urged the business community to invite increased foreign investment and take similar initiatives themselves for quickening development of the national economy, reports UNB.

She was addressing the newly elected executive committee of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) led by its president Salman F Rahman, who called on her at the International Conference Centre in the afternoon.

Referring to the lively and keenly competitive elections to the Federation, the Prime Minister said, "It proves that free and fair elections can be held if democracy and a democratic government exist."

Begum Zia told the business leaders that the Federation

also has the responsibility to talk to the Opposition and make them understand that peace and stability is imperative for encouraging investment in the country.

"Differences will be there," she said, adding those could be resolved through discussion.

Stressing the need for augmenting both foreign and local investment, she asserted increased investment can minimise the problem of poverty through expediting development process.

She reiterated the importance of the private sector in the development of the country's industrial sector and overall economy.

Congratulating the new FBCCI leaders, Begum Zia said her government was trying its best to strengthen the private

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Textiles reforms uncertain

By Special Correspondent

The implementation of a 16-point programme to revamp the ailing textile industry has become uncertain due to disagreements on the proposed restructuring duties and taxes on textile goods.

The 16-point programme, formulated by the Ministry of Textiles more than a year ago, incorporated development plans and proposals for all the sectors in the textile industry. Solutions to critical problems faced by the industry were also suggested in the programme.

Restructuring of taxes for textile goods was emphasised in

the programme which also recommended complete lifting of import duty on all the raw materials for the industry.

The withdrawal of import duty and taxes would help different sub-sectors of textile industry become competitive both in local and foreign markets. "Such a step will also help stop smuggling of yarn and other raw materials into the country," a source in the Textile Ministry said.

To offset the revenue loss due to such withdrawals, the ministry suggested imposition of 7.5 per cent gross taxes in-

cluding three per cent VAT on textile raw materials, spares and finished products. "This will increase the government's revenue income from textile goods," the source said.

A five-member ministerial level committee assigned to examine the 16-point programme, however, differed with the Textile Ministry's suggestion on taxation of taxes. The committee endorsed the programme and also agreed in principle to reduce the import duty but recommended that the gross taxes on textile raw materials and

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For fear of boos

LLANELLI, Wales, Oct 29: Organisers have dropped plans to sing Britain's national anthem at a rugby match Saturday because they are afraid their guest of honour, Prince Charles, will be booed, reports AP.

The Prince of Wales, criticised for admitting in a recent biography that he never loved his wife and was unfaithful to her, will meet the home team and their opponents, the South African national side, before the kick-off.

"We were concerned about the prospect of playing 'God

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Purbanchal Model Town Project Violation of compensation rules alleged

By Nazmul Ashraf

The decision regarding compensation for the lands earmarked for the Purbanchal Model Town Project (PMT) has been termed by Rajuk officials a violation of relevant rules.

The decision to provide compensation at a rate of Taka one lakh per bigha was taken purely on political grounds and it was not based on the prices of the lands, the officials told The Daily Star on condition of

anonymity.

The per bigha price of the lands for the PMTP at Yusufganj of Narayanganj will hardly be Tk 30,000 if the price is fixed as per the land acquisition law, the officials said.

Citing the relevant rules, they said the price is fixed by averaging the rates at which lands in the project area were sold during the year that fol-

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Pandemonium in Pak parliament

ISLAMABAD, Oct 29: Pakistan's opposition rejected Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's hand of friendship Saturday walking out of Parliament and abruptly ending a rowdy opening session, reports AP.

"I extend to them the hand of friendship in the name of the constitution, democracy and the rule of law," Benazir said in an emotional appeal to her opponents to end their two-month-old, campaign to unseat her government.

In September, the leader of the opposition in Parliament, Nawaz Sharif began organising protest rallies, nationwide strikes and protest marches to

press his demands for Benazir's resignation and fresh polls.

On Saturday, Sharif dismissed Benazir's reconciliation offer and demanded the release of several opposition lawmakers jailed in connection with anti-government demonstrations.

Pakistani politics is often unruly but Saturday's Parliamentary session was particularly rowdy.

Opposition lawmakers shouted abuses at the government, dozens of legislators grappled with each other and the only woman in the opposition ranks accused Benazir of betraying

her sex.

Screaming "democracy is worse than martial law," Tehmina Daultana left her chair and rushed toward Benazir, wagging her finger furiously.

"Do you know what it means to respect a woman? Do you know what happened to me?" Daultana screamed.

Two legislators stopped the angry Daultana before she could reach Benazir, who sat passively rolling her beads.

Daultana said police had beat her with steel-tipped sticks when she tried to lead a protest march last month from her headquarters in the centre.

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Chawkidar shot dead by dacoits

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Oct 29: A village sentry (chawkidar) was shot dead allegedly by armed dacoits on Friday night at Rangunia thana, 20 miles off the city, police said.

Md Ilias, 35, came under fire while he tried to hold one of the dacoits who were waiting at Santiniketan village of Rangunia thana for an attack on a house, police added.

Ilias died instantly on the spot and the dacoits fled. Ilias was accompanying some thana police who were on a hunt for criminals wanted in connection with a number of cases, district police here said.

Fresh clashes in Khulna

From Our Correspondent

KHULNA, Oct 29: Political unrest here is gradually mounting following the killing of two students in clashes between the Jatiyabadi Chhatra Dal and the Islamic Chhatra Shibir last week.

There were a series of explosions in different areas of the city from early morning till noon today in which a former principal of the MM City College, Rahul Amin, was seriously injured.

According to Kotwali police two cocktails were exploded in front of the Sir Iqbal Road branch of Agrani Bank at about

10:30am when the former principal was injured.

Home-made bombs were also exploded in front of the govt Coronation Girls' School, the Sundarban College and the Govt BL College.

Another bomb was hurled at the Commerce College at about 11 this morning.

Police said unidentified persons riding motor-cycles exploded these bombs.

A group of young men were also found moving in rickshaws in different areas of Khulna town this evening carrying fire arms and sharp weapons.

One to die for murder in Khulna

From Our Correspondent

KHULNA, Oct 29: One person was sentenced to death and seven others were given life imprisonments today for murdering a local Wapda contractor.

The judgement was passed by the Additional District and Sessions Judge, First Court, Sirajuddin Ahmed.

The man sentenced to death is Farukur Rahman of Abu Khan Lane, Khulna and those given life terms are: Sajjad Shaheen Prince, Abul

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College student drowns in Bay

From Our Correspondent

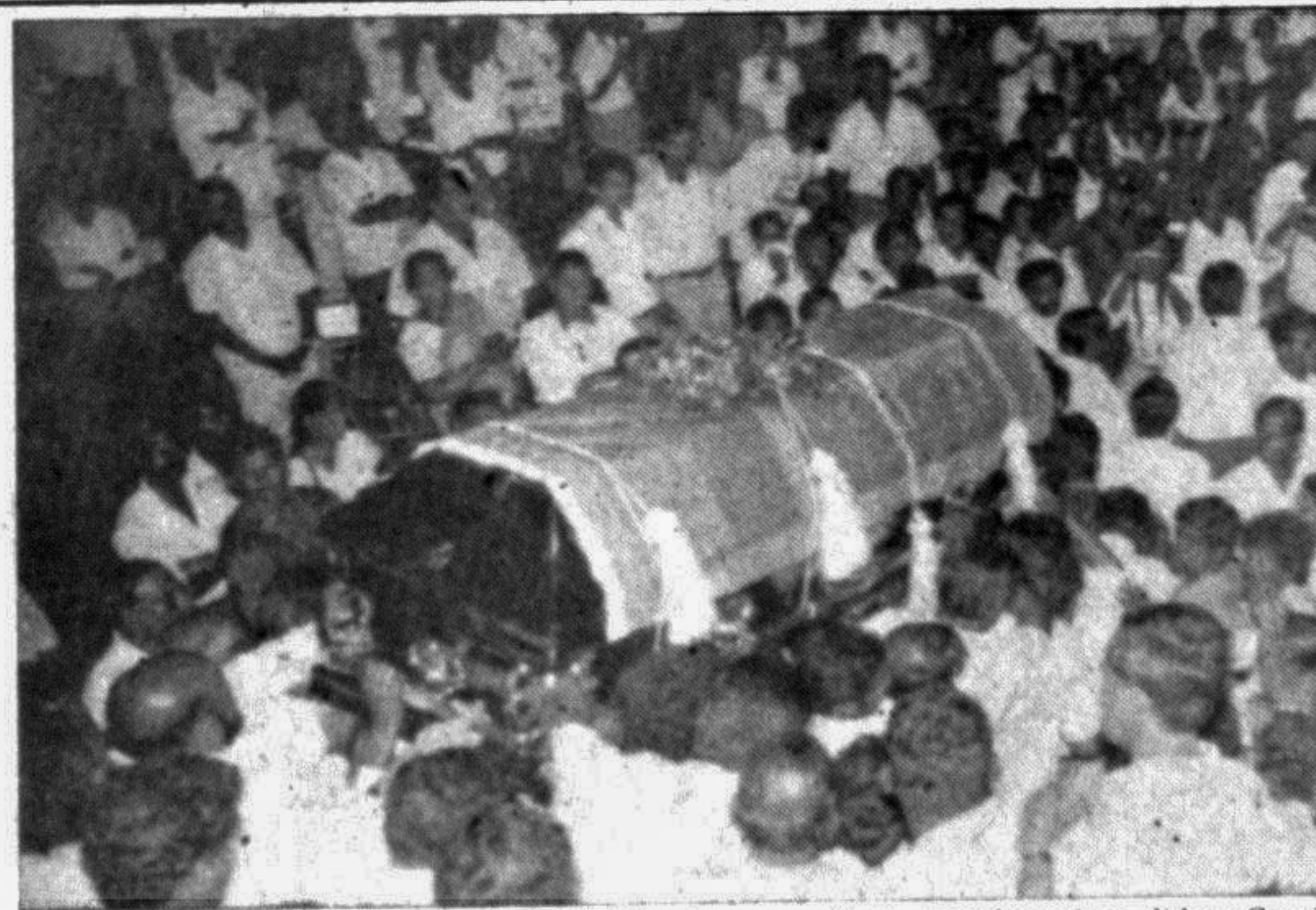
COX'S BAZAR, Oct 29: A college student drowned while bathing in the Bay here today.

Tushar Gomez, 19, a student of the Government Commerce College in Dhaka went to the sea beach near the Jhinuk market here at about 10 am with his parents and a sister.

While his parents were sitting on the beach, Tushar and his sister were bathing in waist-deep water during low tide. Suddenly a big wave swept him away and he could not be seen for nearly 10 minutes. Then he was recovered from the water and rushed to the Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Tushar, his mother and sister came here earlier this morning with his father Antonio Badal Gomez of Purbajabbar, Dhaka.

The body of Tushar was handed over to his parents after autopsy and was taken to Dhaka in the evening.



Mourners carry the wooden coffin of Sri Lankan opposition presidential candidate Gamini Dissanayake draped in the national flag to a three-tiered funeral pyre in Colombo yesterday. Dissanayake was killed in an explosion along with 50 others during a rally October 24.

— AFP photo

Dissanayake cremated Lankan govt boycotts funeral

COLOMBO, Oct 29: The Sri Lankan government today boycotted the heavily guarded national funeral here for assassinated opposition leader Gamini Dissanayake, report agencies.

Angry mourners booed and jeered as no one turned up from the government to deliver a scheduled funeral tribute on behalf of the administration of Prime Minister Chandrika Kumaratunga. Dissanayake's wooden coffin, draped in the national lion flag, was cremated inside a three-tiered sandalwood pyre at the independence square public promenade shortly after sunset.

Over 3,000 police and army commandos ringed the independence square as tens of thousands of men and women poured into watch a glimpse of the cremation, which was also boycotted by state television. Witnesses said the funeral

pyre was lit by two of Dissanayake's nephews in the presence of members of his family.

Dissanayake was killed with 53 others by a suspected Tamil rebel suicide bomber at an election rally on October 23.

Former speaker Haniffa Mohamed urged the government to appoint a commission to investigate the assassination. "This killing by (Tamil) terrorists is a barbaric act and a senseless action that has plunged the country into despair and grief," he said in an oration at the state funeral.

Police estimated a crowd at about 100,000 people—far more than the number at President Ranasinghe Premadasa's funeral in May 1993—was present. No incidents had been reported so far, police said.

Tens of thousands of mourners followed an open black hearse carrying the body of

Dissanayake, the latest victim in Sri Lanka's long history of political assassinations.

A helicopter showered the procession with flowers as it moved through streets lined with people, many of whom had tears streaming down their cheeks.

Soldiers and policemen took up positions throughout the city, stopping and examining cars and drivers.

Dissanayake opposed the government's peace overtures toward the Tamil rebels, who have fought since 1983 for a Tamil homeland in the north and east of Sri Lanka. About 34,000 people have been killed in the fighting.

National mourning was marked by bitter accusations hurled by the two main political parties at each other.

Dissanayake's widow Srma, chosen to replace him in the presidential race for the

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