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**NEWS BRIEFS**

**Another Bill placed in JS**

The Acquisition and Requisition of Immovable Property (Amendment) Bill, 1994 was introduced in Parliament yesterday seeking to remove complications in acquiring lands for development projects. State Minister for Land Kabir Hossain introduced the Bill which sought increased power to Deputy Commissioners to acquire land above 10 bighas for expediting development projects, reports UNB.

**Polls observers off to Nepal**

A team from Bangladesh has left Dhaka for Kathmandu yesterday to observe the Parliamentary election in Nepal on November 15. The team includes former Chief Justice Kemal Uddin Hossain, Chairman of the Bangladesh Human Rights Commission (BHRC) Justice K M Sobhan, Barrister Amir-Ul-Islam, Secretary General of the BHRC Akram Hossain Chowdhury and Mahfuza Khanom Chowdhury, said a BHRC press release.

**Israeli tourists in Jordan**

WADI ARABA CROSSING, Jordan, Nov 13: Tourists from Israel arrived in Jordan Sunday, the first such visitors from the Jewish state since it signed a peace pact with Jordan nearly a month ago. The tourists waved Jordanian and Israeli flags as they descended from a bus at this southern desert crossing where the peace treaty was signed on October 26, reports AP.

**One killed in Road accident**

A teenaged boy was killed and two others were injured in a road accident at the Jatrabari road crossing in the city yesterday afternoon. Kaifee Azmi, 19, son of one late Ahmed Hossain was killed when his motorbike collided head-on with a scooter at about 5.30 pm.



**ENFORCED REST:** These day-labourers, deprived of the odd jobs which forms their livelihood, use the forced lay-off caused by yesterday's country-wide Opposition hartal to catch up on some badly needed rest. This picture was taken around noon at the city's busy Kawran Bazar area — Star photo by Emran Hossain

## Hartal observed countrywide

**By Staff Correspondent**

A countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal called by the mainstream Opposition to press home its demand for a caretaker government to hold general elections was observed peacefully yesterday.

In some incidents, however, over 40 persons were injured in the capital and in Barisal Division when opponents and supporters of the hartal clashed.

A peaceful hartal was observed in the capital Saturday also at the call of the major opposition parties — the Awami League (AL), the Jatiya Party and the Jamaat-e-Islami.

In Dhaka, during the hartal period yesterday, a youth was stabbed in Amiltola area under Lalbagh thana at around 4:30 pm. The victim, Babu, was participating in a Jatiya Party (JP) procession.

Witnesses said, a group of eight to 10 young men, armed with hockey sticks and various weapons, attacked the JP procession. After a brief clash they left the scene. The injured youth was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Our Staff Correspondent in Barisal reported that 10 persons were injured in Bhola town, 17 in Patuakhali district and 13 in Pirojpur district in clashes between the activists of the Awami League (AL) and the JP and the BNP.

In the capital, cocktails were exploded in Farmgate, Fakirerpool and Gulistan and other areas. Over two dozens of cocktails were exploded in Farmgate and Gulistan areas since morning.

At around 11:45 am, two cars and one minibus, carrying the visiting British business delegation, were stopped by the pro-hartal activists. Witnesses said, hartal activists from both sides of the road

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## Korea to set up industrial park in Ctg

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 13: Two Malaysian and Korean investment companies have signed an agreement here on Saturday to set up and develop an industrial park under the style 'Korean Industrial Park in Bangladesh,' reports BSS.

The park is a new concept, to be introduced first time in Bangladesh, where the Korean entrepreneurs would only set up different types of industries. The Korean industrial park would be set up in Chittagong initially, where approximately 1000 industries would come under the purview of this unique venture, official sources said.

The Board of Investment, Bangladesh would provide all necessary assistance for introduction and implementation of the new concept to pioneer the industrial development of the country. Industries like electronics, textiles and garments, chemicals, leather goods and mechanical equipment would be set up in the park initially, the sources said.

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## Ninian conveys fresh BNP plan to Hasina

**Star Report**

Ruling party negotiators yesterday handed over a modified proposal for an interim government to Commonwealth-assigned facilitator Sir Ninian Stephen who later conveyed it to the Leader of the Opposition, political sources said.

Four ruling party negotiators led by Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury met with Sir Ninian at the state guest house, Meghna in the evening and handed over the new proposal of a multi-party cabinet with Begum Khaleda Zia as its chief. In the new formula, provision has been kept for the induction of a nonpartisan technocrat to hold the key portfolios at the time of elections.

With the new proposal Sir Ninian held a 30-minute meeting with Leader of the Opposition and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina at her official Minto Road residence last night.

An Opposition source said Sheikh Hasina reportedly told Sir Ninian that the fresh proposal of the ruling party was 'nothing new.'

The basic elements remain the same in the new ruling party proposal, the Opposition leader reportedly observed.

The opposition parties are likely to place their alternative proposal to Sir Ninian on the return of Sheikh Hasina from her three-day North Bengal tour.

Hasina is expected to return on Wednesday after addressing several meetings in Bogra, Rangpur and Gaibandha starting today, party sources said.

Opposition sources indicated the opposition allies have almost reached a consensus to accept the idea of a

nonpartisan interim council of ministers with President Abdur Rahman Biswas as its chief. The opposition parties are expected to submit this proposal to the Commonwealth facilitator after Sheikh Hasina's return on November 16.

Supporting this formula, a senior opposition leader told The Daily Star that 'At least such a government would be better than a multiparty government with Begum Zia as its chief.'

He said that if the opposition parties take such a decision, it will be a major shift from its original position of forming a caretaker government with the Chief Justice as its head.

Both ruling party and opposition negotiators may sit across the table once again to discuss the two proposals.

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## Opposition calls 48-hr hartal from Dec 7

**By Staff Correspondent**

The major opposition parties yesterday announced identical agitation programmes, including a 48-hour country-wide hartal on December 7 and 8, to press home their demand for holding general elections under a caretaker administration.

Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina, Jatiya Party (JP) leader Moudud Ahmed and Jamaat-e-Islami leader Matur Rahman Nizami announced the programmes at separate news conference at the Jatiya Sangsad (JS) Bhaban.

The programmes also include a countrywide road and rail barricade on November 29. Besides, marches are planned at the district headquarters on November 24 and in the capital on November 27.

The parties will also hold separate rallies in the city on December 6.

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## Hartals can't halt BNP programmes: Khaleda

PORSHA (Naogaon), Nov 13: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today said that the BNP came to power with the people's mandate and would go ahead with its development programmes despite unwarranted obstruction, reports UNB.

'The BNP did not assume power in darkness of night or at anyone's mercy,' she said referring to the Opposition agitation, including hartal, designed to force her government to hand over power to a non-party caretaker government.

Addressing mammoth public meetings at the Porsha thana College ground in Naogaon and the Bhawaniganj College ground in Bagmara thana of Rajshahi district, Begum Zia said the programmes of her government are for the poor and vowed to carry out those despite the obstacles being created by the Opposition with hartals and 'destructive' activities.

'They (opposition parties) do not want development of the country, education of the people, and this is why they are resorting to hartals, strikes and destruction of public property,' the Prime Minister said amidst slogans against hartals and strikes.

She charged some political parties with making attempts to push the country backward by creating indiscipline and obstructing development activities taken up by the BNP government.

'The Opposition is not only opposing my party, they are blocking every development efforts undertaken by the government by indulging in hartals and obstruction one after another,' she added. 'In spite of their opposition, our programmes have not halted because people want peace and are very much with us.'

Begum Zia said they want the country to remain foreign aid-dependent, poverty-stricken and people uneducated in order to continue their politics of 'hoax.'

The Prime Minister said

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## Oil exploration: Govt may initial contracts today

**By Staff Correspondent**

The government is expected to initial a production-sharing contract (PSC) with Cairn plc of Scotland and Holland Sea Search of the Netherlands on the exploration of oil and gas in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Chittagong and Feni today, an authoritative source in Petrobangla said.

Three officials of the government and three executives from the foreign oil companies will be present on the occasion.

Cairn plc and Holland Sea Search signed an agreement on May 5 for exploration of oil and gas in the Bay of Bengal near the Cox's Bazar-Sandwip region and development of the Kutubdia gas field, designated as-Block No 16 by Petrobangla.

The PSC for Block No 15, covering the greater Chittagong region, includes the Semutrag gas field in the Hill Tracts and the gas field in Feni.

Representatives of Cairn plc

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## Opposition MPs to quit anytime: Hasina

**By Staff Correspondent**

Sheikh Hasina said yesterday that the parliamentary opposition would 'resign anytime' to force the government to accept its demand for holding the next three general elections under non-partisan caretaker governments.

The leader of the Opposition in Parliament and chief of the Awami League (AL) told a press conference at the Sangsad Bhaban 'We would have resigned on November 9 but we did not implement the decision at the request of the Commonwealth Secretary General's envoy Sir Ninian Stephen.'

Referring to the Opposition MPs' submission of resignation papers to their respective parliamentary party leaders, Hasina said 'the resignation papers can now be submitted to the Speaker anytime.'

The Opposition leader once again called upon the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) to agree to amend the Constitution for incorporating provisions for caretaker government to hold at least three consecutive general elections.

She said if three elections could be held under a nonpartisan administration, the nation would definitely witness political stability as well as economic progress.

Referring to the Commonwealth-brokered dialogue, the opposition leader said people had expected that a solution would be reached through discussion. But it seems that the government has chosen

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## No compromise on interim govt issue: AL

**By Staff Correspondent**

Awami League president member Abdur Razzak, MP, said yesterday his party would settle the caretaker government issue on the streets if the current dialogue ended in a failure.

Addressing a rally organised by the AL city branch at Bangabandhu Avenue in the capital, Razzak emphatically said his party would never compromise on the demand for elections under a non-party caretaker administration.

'Khaleda Zia will have to quit the way Ershad did if she fails to meet the Opposition demand,' the AL leader warned.

It would be a wise decision on the part of the BNP government to accept the demand in the early stage of the on-

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## 300 affected by toxic gas in Delhi

NEW DELHI, Nov 13: Nearly 300 people were reported ill here early today after inhaling toxic fumes produced when residents set sacks containing plastic and a chemical ablaze in a bid to beat the winter chill, police said, reports AFP.

Hundreds of others fled their homes in panic when the fumes, apparently chlorine-based, spread quickly through the sprawling lower middle class district of Kadam Puri on the eastern fringes of the Indian capital, the police said.

Many who inhaled the fumes collapsed in their homes and on the streets vomiting and coughing violently, witnesses said. Nearly

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## Russia will buy 75000 tonnes of jute a year

**By Staff Correspondent**

Bangladesh has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Moscow for exporting 75,000 tonnes of jute and jute goods to Russia under a 27 million US dollar annual credit line offered by Dhaka.

This was revealed by Jute Minister A S M Hannan Shah at a press briefing yesterday at the Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) office here.

The 5-year MOU was signed this month in Moscow during a visit by a Bangladesh delegation led by the Jute Minister.

Hannan Shah also briefed newsmen about the out come of his recent European visit and about the performance of the public sector jute mills, which, he said, is increasingly getting better.

Increased exports by the 27 BJMC mills, he added, led to a profit of Tk 1.74 crore in September and Tk 7.88 crore in November this year.

Under the accord signed in Moscow, 60,000 tonnes of jute goods and 15,000 tonnes of raw jute would be exported to Russia annually by the BJMC. The special credit line, to be operated through the Sonali, Janata and Agrani banks, is in addition to the 25 million dollar credit line earlier announced by the government for exports to Russia, and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the minister noted.

The repayment terms would be finalised within one

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## Musician murdered in city

**By Staff Correspondent**

The body of Noni Gopal Hawladar, 34, a musician, murdered Thursday afternoon, was recovered from a passage between Dhaka College and the New Super Market in the city yesterday.

He was stabbed to death. Noni Gopal was missing since he had gone to one Abdul Khaleq — owner of a store at the New Super Market — Thursday afternoon. He had gone there to withdraw some of the money he had reportedly invested in the store.

However, nobody, not even his wife, Happy Hawladar, could confirm the amount of money he had invested in the business with Khaleq.

Khaleq told police Friday evening that he saw some people abducting Noni Gopal after

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## Joblessness, corruption add to miseries of the drought-hit

**By Nazmul Ashraf, back from Kurigram**

Basanti, who made newspaper headlines during the 1974 famine, was among several hundred people who rushed to us when we reached Namadaspara village of Chilmari thana under Kurigram district, the area worst-hit by this year's drought in the country's northern region.

Clad in a torn cotton saree, Basanti, now in her early forties, could hardly speak because she was ill for long. 'Give me food, I'm hungry,' she murmured.

Her paternal uncle Buduram Das, who looks after her, alleged they did not get any relief items as yet.

During our recent visit to the area the villagers mistook us to be relief distributors and requested us to enlist them.

Despite repeated disclosure of our identities and purposes, they continued to insist on noting down their names in the hope that this might help them get relief materials. Bishnuram Das, Dilip, Lalchan

dra, Shukendra Chandra Das, Montu Das, Sunil Chandra Das, Sumitri, Arjun, Kherobala, Jamila, Suchi Bala and Maloti were the many who kept us encircled until their names

a retired primary school teacher, told The Daily Star that only four of Namadaspara's 349 families had so far received VGD cards.

The inhabitants of Namadaspara, better known as Jelepura, live on fishing. Scarcity of fish and absence of other means of livelihood had left the fishermen in a helpless condition. They are now also failing to sell their labour to the rich farmers who are also hit by the drought, according to them. Bharoti, a widow with four children of Jelepura, followed us for quite sometime just to make sure that her name was taken down.

Balajan of Montola Char under Chilmari union was waiting to cross the Brahmaputra river to sell dry twigs she collected from the char lands. Like her, Balajan, said, many others from her area were living on collection and sale of dry twigs, dry grass etc as fuel. 'Returns from the sale are too little to buy a

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This old woman of Rou'narichar in Kurigram, one of the areas hardest hit by drought, sits beside her collection of twigs which she will sell as firewood to earn her bowl of rice. — Star photo by A K M Mohsin

## Bangladeshi troops in Bihac safe

Bangladeshi troops on UN peacekeeping assignment in the Balkan peninsula are safe, reports UNB.

An official handout yesterday said attention of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was drawn to a news item appearing in a section of the local press that 1200 Bangladeshi troops had become trapped in Bihac enclave in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Giving the factual position in this regard, it said 'Bangladesh battalion is at present safe and not under any threat in Bihac town where it is located.'

It said UNPROFOR is providing all possible measures to reach supplies to the battalion which still had a reserve supply to meet emergencies.

If Bangladesh battalion's security is assessed to be seriously threatened, UNPROFOR will act appropriately to protect its personnel, the handout said.

Bangladesh mission in New York, the handout said, had been in constant touch with the UN department of peacekeeping operations to monitor situation