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NEWS BRIEFS

Housewife slain

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Dec 4: A young housewife was slaughtered at her village home at Mowa under Dubag union of Beanibazar thana early today. Police sent the body of Rina Begum, 25 to the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College hospital for autopsy. The victim's husband Tajamul Ali Pakhi has been working in Saudi Arabia for the last five years. The cause of the murder could not be ascertained immediately, police said.

GF meet today

The Gano Forum (GF) will hold a public meeting at Purnana Palton crossing today at 3 pm. President of the Gano Forum, Dr Kamal Hossain will address the meeting as chief guest, reports UNB.

Old man killed

By Staff Correspondent

An 80-year-old man was killed when a speeding bus hit him at Bhaluka yesterday afternoon. The victim Kamaluddin died on the spot. The Dhaka-bound bus sped away immediately after the accident but it was intercepted by police at Banani. Police seized the bus.

US envoy meets relief minister

US Ambassador in Bangladesh David N. Merrill called on State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Harun-ur-Rashid at the minister's office here yesterday. They discussed matters relating to bilateral and mutual interest, reports UNB.

2 killed during crackdown: 5000 arrested

Rebel Ansars surrender

By Staff Correspondent

At least two Ansars sepoys were killed and 20 others wounded in a pre-dawn crackdown on the rebellious Ansars yesterday.

Contingents of the army, BDR and police went into action to put an end to their three-day militant revolt.

Some 5000 rebel Ansars in Dhaka, Shafipur and Chittagong were arrested and sent to different district jails, unconfirmed reports said.

The two dead were identified as Ali Mortuza of 19 Ansars Battalion and Ruhul Amin of 32 Battalion at Shafipur.

The rebel Ansars at the Shafipur training academy under Gazipur district surren-

dered following a joint operation by Army, BDR and armed police contingents early in the morning while those at the Khilgaon headquarters in the city surrendered around 10:30 am. Only BDR jawans and police took part in the Khilgaon operation.

Army helicopters hovered low over the Ansars headquarters and the academy at Shafipur to scare the Ansars ranks who had taken positions on rooftops and other strategic spots.

The BDR used heavy weapons like rockets, two-inch mortars and light machineguns while police lobbed teargas shells on the Khilgaon Ansars Headquarters and the

Shafipur academy during the operations that lasted several hours.

Platoons of the para-military BDR led by Colonel Sadeq Hossain and Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) contingents led by Deputy Commissioner Masudul Haq cordoned off the headquarters around 2 am and went into action around 4:30 am, according to a BDR official who took part in the operation.

Earlier, police blocked all roads in the area and warned local people about the raid over loudspeakers.

A BDR official told this correspondent that when the army choppers flew low to scare away the agitating Ansars sepoys at the headquarters,

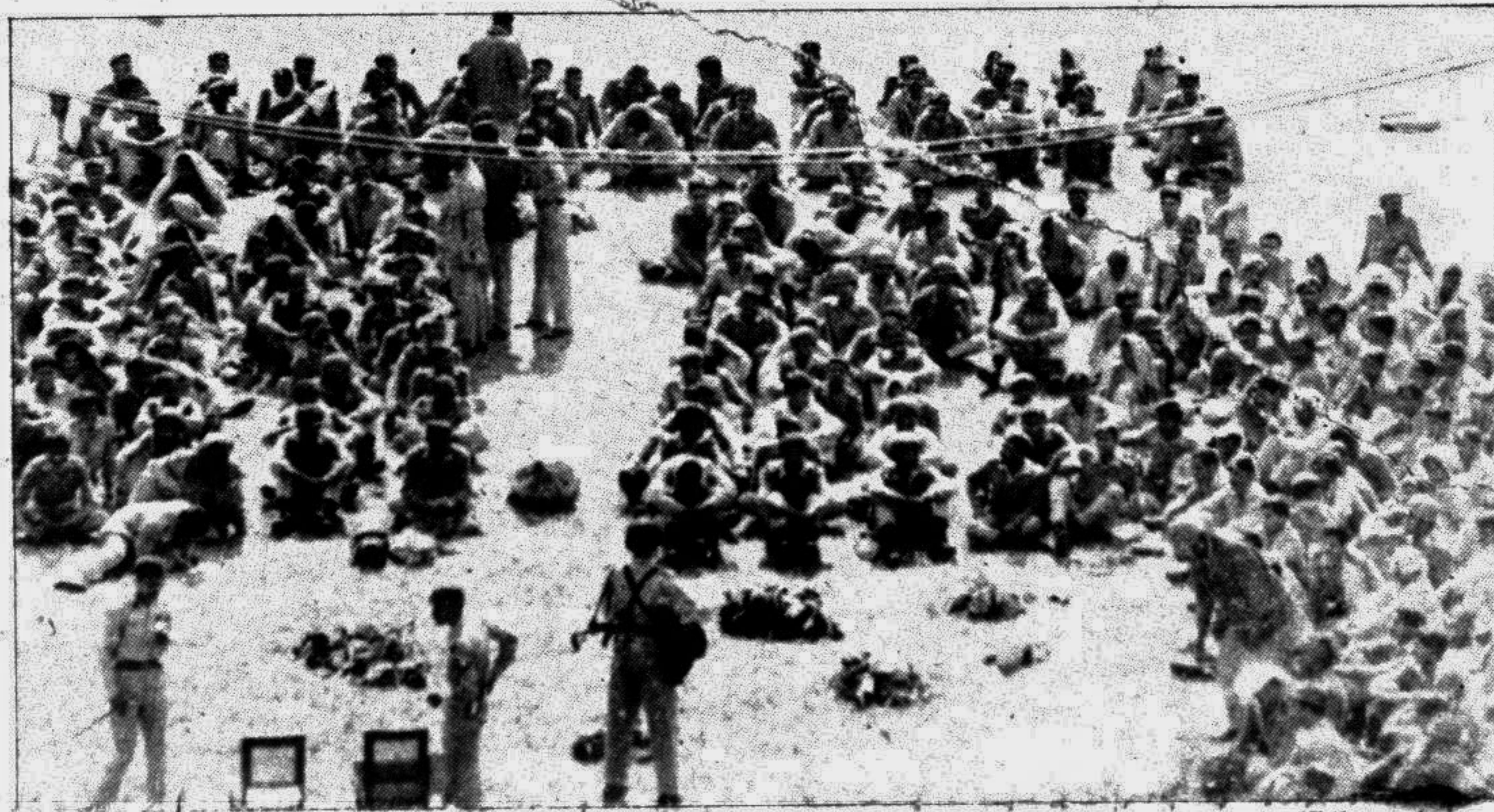
the BDR fired five rockets, seven mortar shells and around 200 rounds with LMGs.

"We tried to save all the sepoys, but at least 20 of them were injured, four seriously with head injuries", he said, seeking anonymity.

The BDR official confirmed that the agitating Ansars who were carrying .303 rifles did not fire any shots. "If they had done so the situation would have been much worse," he added.

After effecting the surrender of the rebels police and BDR entered the headquarters and arrested 664 Ansars sepoys and recovered 740 rifles and some 10,000 rounds of

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Bangladesh Rifles jawans guard over disarmed and demobilised Ansars after their forced surrender at the Khilgaon Ansars headquarters yesterday.

Star photo

Situation now peaceful, says Press Note

The situation, arising out of the violent and unruly activities of some indiscipline members of battalion Ansars, is now completely peaceful and discipline has been restored, a government Press Note said in Dhaka yesterday, reports BSS.

The Press Note issued by the Home Ministry said that two members of Ansars were killed and seven others injured when the forces of the law-enforcing agencies had to take necessary steps to disarm them. In this connection it said some misguided members of Ansars created impediments and opened fire at the law-enforcing agencies engaged in the process of bringing the situation under control and restoring discipline. Measures have been taken for the immediate treatment of the injured members of Ansar battalion.

The government called out army at Shafipur and BDR and police at some other places to restore discipline in the battalion Ansars and ensure security in the public life.

The Press Note said, "On December 1 some indiscipline members of Ansar battalion at Shafipur Ansars Academy and Khilgaon Ansars headquarters created violent indiscipline all on a sudden demanding solution to their certain, problems immedi-

ately. At one stage they created barricade on Dhaka-Tangail highway causing disruption in the traffic, destroyed public property, insulted senior officials, ransacked their houses, detained officials including several hundred woman trainees and thus contributed to the extreme deterioration of the law and order situation. Their unruly behaviour posed a threat to the security of lives and property of the peoples of the surrounding areas, such a conduct on the part of the members of the law enforcing agencies is neither expected nor desirable under any circumstances.

On that day the Director General of Ansars Major General Sayed Badruzzaman directed all the Ansars of Shafipur Ansars Academy to be present at the Darbar at 11 am to discuss their various problems. All members of Ansars assembled at the Darbar accordingly, but before the director general came to the spot extreme in tension erupted among them at one stage and some unruly Ansars armed with sticks fell up on the deputy director general. As a result, the deputy director general was compelled to leave the Darbar place and the director general was unable to be present there. Despite re-

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Members of the Battalion Ansars depositing their arms at the Ansars headquarters at Khilgaon in the city yesterday.

Star photo

Regional export financing and strengthening of ACU suggested

By Staff Correspondent

Strengthening the existing Asian Clearing Union (ACU) and providing regional export financing facilities were recommended at a two-day regional workshop on Payments and Monetary Cooperation in South Asia which concluded yesterday.

State Minister for Finance Mr Mojibur Rahman, MP was the chief guest at the concluding session of the workshop jointly organised by Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), a local think-tank and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), a German research organisation at a city hotel yesterday.

The recommendations of the workshop were read out by Prof Rehman Sobhan, executive chairman of the CPD. Attended by local experts

and delegates from India, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka, the workshop identified the advantage of ACU, a trade financing mechanism among regional countries, in operation for the last two decades, as a force which reduces dependence of the SAARC region on the outside world.

However, the speakers at the workshop highlighted the existing problems of the ACU such as: the delay in payments; period set for settlements only two months; lack of timely correspondence since the headquarters is in Tehran; travel transaction not covered; and bilateral payment arrangements.

The speakers pointed out the relevance of ACU under current currency convertibil-

ties and trade liberalization has declined.

But they added that it is still relevant since high growth rates might dwindle reserves through increased imports. And as foreign capital inflows may be erratic, it may reduce the reserves.

The participants recommended that the settlement period should be extended from two months to six months to two years; clearing arrangement should be multi-lateral; surplus countries should extend suitable line of credit facility to deficit countries; make ACU voluntary; incorporate travel and other services account transactions into ACU; ACU modalities should be streamlined; trade enhancing

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Corruption case against Malek, 4 others

Former administrator of Dhaka City Corporation Colonel (Retd) MA Malek and four others were yesterday charged with misappropriation of about Taka 13 lakh through illegal influence and misuse of power, a Bureau of Anti-Corruption press release said, reports BSS.

The Bureau filed a case with Sutrapur thana against Col (Retd) MA Malek, Md Abdus Sattar Miah, former chief executive of the DCC and presently deputy commissioner of Madaripur, Md Elahi Bux, acting chief storekeeper and purchase officer of the DCC, Tofazzal Hossain, assistant storekeeper and purchase officer, and Md. Abul Bashir, the proprietor of M/s S Enterprise.

The accused were charged

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29 killed as boat sinks in Sunamganj

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Dec 4: At least 29 people were killed when a boat with 50 aboard capsized in the river Bolai, about 10 kilometre off Jamalganj thana headquarters under Sunamganj district early hours today.

Officials said 29 bodies had been recovered. Of them three were of men, 11 of women and 15 of children.

The mechanised boat while on way to Badaghat of Jamalganj thana of Sunamganj district from the Bhairob Bazar of Kishoreganj district collided with another vessel carrying sands at Bagani at about 5:30 in the morning.

The bodies recovered had been sent to the Jamalganj Thana Headquarters. None of the bodies could be identified yet.

The death toll may go up.

officials feared.

Local people, police and district officials continued the rescue operation searching for survivors of the ferry disaster.

Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Kamaluddin and Police Super Lutfar Rahman visited the scene.

A case was registered with Jamalganj thana.

PM shocked

BSS adds: The Prime Minister, Begum Khaleda Zia, tonight expressed her profound shock and grief at the loss of lives in boat capsizing.

The Prime Minister directed the relevant local administration to intensify search operations to rescue missing passengers of the boat which capsized after crashing

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Opposition may relax hartal restrictions

By Staff Correspondent

The parliamentary Opposition may relax some restrictions on the movement of transports during its 48-hour hartal, scheduled to begin at 6 am on December 7.

Leaders of the opposition parties had a long discussion last night on their next course of action to compel the BNP government to accept the demand for the next general elections to be held under a non-partisan, caretaker government.

The meeting, presided over by Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina, observed that the realisation of the demand for a caretaker government may take time. Therefore, in order not to antagonise the public by subjecting them to hardships caused by hartals and strikes, the opposition may relax some of the

restrictions enforced during hartals, an influential leader attending yesterday's meeting told The Daily Star.

Rickshaws, push-carts and rickshaw vans are likely to be allowed to ply on the streets at night during the planned 48-hour country-wide shut-down.

The opposition leaders yesterday also discussed the possible options open to the government following the announcement of the Opposition's threat to resign en masse from Parliament.

The opposition parties, especially the Awami League, the Jatiya Party and the Jamaat, plan to announce the date and method of their resignation from separate rallies scheduled in the city tomorrow.

The opposition leaders, while reviewing the press at

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JS okays Bill for ID cards for voters

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Sangsad (JS) yesterday passed legislation providing specifics of the identity cards to be issued to each and every voter by the Election Commission (EC).

The Electoral Rolls (Amendment) Bill, 1994 was passed to equip the EC with the authority to issue identity cards in the light of the Representation of People Order (Amendment) Act 1994, adopted four days ago.

That Bill, empowered the EC to issue voter ID cards.

According to the Electoral Rolls Bill 1994, each laminated identity card would carry a laser superimposed photograph of the voter and a code number containing his or her particulars, including the address.

Piloting the Electoral Rolls (Amendment) Bill, 1994, LORD Minister Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder termed both yesterday's and Wednesday's Bills as "historic and unique" and declared that the BNP government which got the mandate of the people in the 1991 national elections would not concede to the demand of a "special type of government as outlined by certain quarters", but would uphold the Constitution to conduct

Parliament elections freely and fairly.

Recalling the nine years of struggle against autocracy, Talukder told the House that the people had established a sovereign Parliament making the cabinet answerable to the House.

"We never believed in any special type of government (caretaker) and still we do not endorse the idea," he said.

Talukder, who is also the BNP Secretary General, disagreed with Opposition suggestion that elections could only be free and fair under a neutral, non-party government.

Terming the Opposition demand as unconstitutional, he said everyone is aware of what has been envisaged in the Constitution.

Criticizing the Opposition's street agitations on the caretaker issue by abandoning Parliament, Barrister Talukder said the people would become fully aware of those who speak of democracy and the Constitution but create chaos on the streets.

It has been noticed that certain elements always obstructed the process of democracy, he said. "And such elements are also here in

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Clashes paralyse ferry services at Aricha

MANIKGANJ, Dec 4: Thou-

sands of people were stranded as clashes between the BIWTC and truck workers paralysed ferry services in the Aricha-Nagarbati and Aricha-Daulatdia routes from late Saturday night to this evening, reports UNB.

Officials and witnesses said several hundred interdistrict coaches, goods-laden trucks and other vehicles remained at halt at the three ferry ghats or on board ferry vessels in the Padma and Jamuna rivers since the trouble erupted at 1 am.

An estimated 35,000 passengers, including women and children, were stranded at the terminals as attacks and counter attacks between the rival groups continued till late this evening.

Four people were injured, two seriously, in the clashes

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Bangladeshi soldier dies in Bosnia

A member of the Bangladesh Battalion in UNPROFOR in Bosnia-Herzegovina died of heart failure on Saturday, reports UNB.

According to an ISPR press release, Mohammad Abdul Hye, 31, a sepoy-cook, was admitted to the field hospital of the battalion at Coralic with complaints of cough and occasional chest pain on November 25 and died there on Saturday.

The body will soon be brought home under UN arrangement for burial at his village home at Phoolbari in Lalpur thana of Natore district.

Lankan FM in city to discuss joint venture

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar arrived in Dhaka for an official visit to Bangladesh reports UNB.

Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman received him at Zia International Airport.

Foreign Secretary MR Osman, Bangladesh High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury and Sri Lankan Acting High Commissioner to Bangladesh CR Jayasinghe were also present.

Talking to the newsmen at the airport, the Lankan FM said that he would discuss with his Bangladesh counterpart the possibility of joint venture industries and expansion of trade between the two countries.

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JS boycott case

Court rejects Moudud's appeal

A High Court division bench yesterday rejected the application filed by Moudud Ahmed to constitute a larger bench for hearing the writ petition regarding the boycott of Parliament, reports BSS.

The bench comprising Justice Kazi Shafiquddin and Justice Kazi A T Monwar Uddin, however, granted two days time to Moudud Ahmed to file application for leave to appeal against the rejection order.

Moudud Ahmed, one of the respondents in a writ petition filed by Advocate Anwar Hossain Khan against the opposition leaders and MPs for

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Ershad's petition for quashment rejected

A High Court division bench yesterday rejected deposed president Hossain Muhammad Ershad's petition for quashment against the proceedings of a corruption case better known as Holiday Inn Hotel case, reports BSS.

Earlier, the bench comprising Justice Naimuddin Ahmed and Justice Mohammad Ruhul Amin delivered a split judgement on a petition for quashment filed by Moudud Ahmed and rejected Abul Khair Litu's petition for quashment.

H M Ershad, Moudud Ahmed and Abul Khair Litu filed three separate quashment petitions against the proceedings in a corruption case pending before a special court, Dhaka.

The case, in brief, is that former president HM Ershad

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