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STOCK MARKET

DSE Index	843.20 (+0.21%)
Market capitalisation Tk	40.59 billion
Turnover in volume	68,070
Turnover in value	Tk 14.36 million

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NEWS BRIEFS

2 new TV relay stations

TV relay stations at Jhendah and Patuakhali will be opened in the first week of January and the construction work of Barisal radio station will also start about the same time. This was disclosed yesterday at the 23rd meeting of Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Information Ministry held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban with Commerce and Information Minister M Shamsul Islam in the chair, reports UNB.

2 killed in Gopalganj clash

GOPALGANJ, Dec 27: Two people were killed and 50 injured in a clash between two rival groups at village Ichhakhali in the district today, Abdur Rezzak Mallick, 50, and Hafiz Fakir, 35, from his rival group died on the spot during a hour-long clash with lethal weapons. The clash occurred when the supporters of Amanur Rahman of the same village tried to capture the onion field of Rezzak Mallick, reports UNB.

10 killed in US road accident

TUBA CITY, Ariz, Dec 27: A head-on collision between a pickup truck and another vehicle on a rural stretch of highway left 10 people dead, authorities said Tuesday. The accident occurred Monday night on the Navajo Indian Reservation in northern Arizona, about 65 miles north of Flagstaff, said Lt Kevin Lee of the Navajo Nation Fire Department reports AP.

Efforts on to avert showdown

Star Report

Both ruling party and Opposition leaders continued intense parleys with each other and among themselves in a bid to find a last-minute solution to the country's political crisis.

Discussions and behind-the-scenes negotiations to spare the country the damaging consequences of an open confrontation between the government and the Opposition running late into the night, had remained inconclusive.

However, sources in both the camps told The Daily Star that efforts would continue throughout the day today to avert the threatened resignation by Opposition members of Parliament.

Top ranking leaders of the ruling party were cloistered at the Prime Minister's Tejgaon

office till well after midnight while Opposition leaders were huddled at the Dhanmandi Road-5 residence of Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina.

Hot-lines were being maintained by both sides and special emissaries from either side were shuttling between the two camps.

Leaders of the three major Opposition parties who gathered at the residence of the Awami League Chief broke off their meeting at 1:15 am. Most of the leaders declined to make any comment, saying only that they had reviewed the situation and discussed their future courses of action.

Awami League presidium member Amir Hussain Amu told this correspondent, "We are preparing for an all-out movement, but negotiations

are still on."

He also said that a settlement at the very last moment was not impossible given the good intention on the part of the ruling party.

"The ball is in the government's court," he said.

Abdul Jalil, joint secretary of the AL, replying to reporters' questions said: "We have not received any concrete proposal from the government side yet."

He said there had been discussions on various proposals conveyed by different intermediaries and added that no positive response could be conveyed to the others side since no formal proposal had come from them.

Asked if the remaining points of discord were major

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Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina speaking at an extended meeting of the Awami League central executive committee in the city yesterday. Awami League leaders Sajeda Chowdhury, Abdus Samad Azad, Abdur Razzak and Tofael Ahmed are also seen. — Star photo

Opposition to resign from JS today

By Staff Correspondent

The opposition parties in Parliament last night reiterated their decision to resign en masse because the government did not accept their demand for a caretaker administration to conduct future general elections.

The opposition had earlier set December 27 as the deadline for accepting the demand.

Briefing newsmen on the outcome of a joint meeting of the opposition parties at the Sangsad Bhaban last night, Chief Whip of the Opposition Mohammad Nasim said "We, the opposition MPs under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina, will submit our resignation letters to the Speaker by 7 pm tomorrow."

The joint meeting was chaired by Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina and addressed by Moudud Ahmed of the Jatiya Party and Matiur Rahman Nizami of the Jamaat-e-Islami. The meeting was followed by separate meetings of the three parties at the Sangsad Bhaban.

"After our resignation from Parliament tomorrow, the country will definitely proceed towards a confrontation and the BNP government will have

no moral and legal ground to stay in power," Nasim told the newsmen.

Because, he explained, the MPs representing the majority voters would leave Parliament as well as the government in "an unlawful state."

"Following our resignation from Parliament, we'll launch an oust-the-government agitation on the streets and will have nothing to demand from the BNP government," Nasim warned. "We are pledge-bound to establish a non-party, neutral, caretaker government to conduct free and fair polls."

The Opposition Chief Whip reiterated that they would enforce a countrywide eight-hour hartal on December 29 and similar hartals in the capital on January 2, 3 and 4. But there would be no agitation programmes during the Biswa Jitema and the Shah-i-Barat.

About their decision to resign, Nasim said there was no instance of en masse resignation by the elected MPs in the world for establishing people's franchise and democracy. But the opposition legislators in Bangladesh were going to do so after much sacrifice. The

See Page 12 Col 1

Struggle till fall of BNP govt, says Hasina

Sheikh Hasina yesterday warned that a one-point movement for the ouster of the government would be started soon after resignation of the opposition members of Parliament today, reports UNB.

"The struggle will be continued until the fall of the ruling party... A one-point movement to oust the government will be started just after the resignation en masse," she said at her party meeting and announced the next course of action, including 6 am to 2 pm hartal on December 29 and on January 2, 3 and 4.

See Page 12 Col 4

Opposition holds public rallies in city today

By Staff Correspondent

Three major opposition parties boycotting Parliament since last March will hold separate public rallies in the city today demanding general elections under a caretaker government.

The schedule of the meetings, declared earlier, was reconfirmed through separate press releases of the parties last night despite hectic, continuing parleys between the

See Page 12 Col 1

Palestinian minister knocked unconscious by Israeli troops

AL-KHADER (Occupied West Bank), Dec 27: Israeli troops battling Palestinians protesting the expansion of a Jewish settlement knocked a Palestinian minister unconscious today, reports AP.

"This is the graveyard of the peace process," said Saeb Erekat, minister of local government in the Palestinian self-rule authority, after he was revived. His glasses were smashed and his clothes covered with mud.

Erekat said Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin must decide whether to have the peace or the settlements. We cannot accept this.

The confrontation started when Erekat joined a group of villagers trying to block Jewish settlers from uprooting olive saplings planted to protest expansion of the Efrat settlement in the occupied West Bank. Dozens of soldiers sur-

rounded the demonstrators and beat them with their fists and rifle butts. Erekat was knocked to the ground and dragged away. The face of one of his guards was covered with blood.

The police were necessary

JERUSALEM, Dec 27: Israeli army today expelled 23 Palestinians studying in the occupied West Bank town of Nablus to the self-rule Gaza Strip, military sources said, reports AFP.

because there was a civilian clash between people and I believe it's the duty of the police to maintain order. Police Minister Moshe Shahal said in response to the incident.

The army had no immediate comment on the incident. Early today, soldiers detained at least 50 of the 200 demonstrators and loaded them onto an army truck. Four protesters were hurt when

soldiers punched them, and several Palestinian women fainted.

About 30 Israelis from the Peace Now movement had joined the villagers at an overnight campsite to protest the planned expansion. Soldiers carted off protesters who lay on the ground with their hands linked, and punched those who resisted.

Jewish settlers uprooted the olive trees planted by the demonstrators.

"You have the guns and we have God with us," shouted demonstrator Fatimah Salah, 65, as four soldiers grabbed her arms and feet and dragged her away. "This is our land. We are not moving from here."

PLO officials have repeatedly threatened to suspend autonomy negotiations with Israel if the government goes ahead with plans to construct

See Page 12 Col 3

HSC merit lists likely to be revised

By Masud Arif

The combined merit lists of the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations held under the Dhaka Board are likely to be further revised because seven fresh names have come up in the lists after the publication of the withheld results yesterday.

The withheld results of around 2500 examinees were released while the results of some 400 students were again withheld because of some faults, an official source said last night.

These withheld results are likely to be released in a couple of days.

One of the seven fresh names in the merit list is learnt to have secured the third position in the combined merit list of the Science group.

See Page 12 Col 8

PM urges Pak govt to take back Biharis

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday urged the Pakistan government to take immediate steps towards resolving the issue of the repatriation of stranded Pakistanis, reports UNB.

"They want to go to Pakistan. It's a humanitarian issue," she told outgoing Pakistani High Commissioner Anwar Kemal who made a farewell call on her at her office in the afternoon.

The Prime Minister mentioned that the first batch of stranded Pakistanis had left Bangladesh during the time of former Prime Minister Newaz Sharif.

Begum Zia told the envoy to apprise his government of the condition of stranded Pakistanis in Bangladesh.

See Page 12 Col 8

Hosts face India in final today

Sports Reporter

Dream faces the sternest reality today when hosts Bangladesh take on pre-tournament favourites India in the final of the four-nation SAARC

cricket championship at the Dhaka Stadium. The 50-overs-a-side match starts at 9 a.m.

The finale of this quadrangular meet, originally sched-

uled for tomorrow, has been brought forward by a day by the organisers Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB) to avoid a clash with the Opposition's half-day hartal programme for Thursday.

The BCCB decision for a sudden change in the schedule came as a sequel to the opposition political parties' reported request to the organisers Monday night which led to an emergency meeting of the participating team managers during yesterday's playing hours.

The rearrangement, abrupt though it may appear, however, isn't likely to have any effect on the finalists, who have already had a day off yesterday and must have shrugged off the stress and strain of Monday's cliffhanger.

Surprise winners in that memorable match, Bangladesh had to wait until the 31st over of yesterday's Pakistan-Sri Lanka tie to know their fate.

See also Page 11.

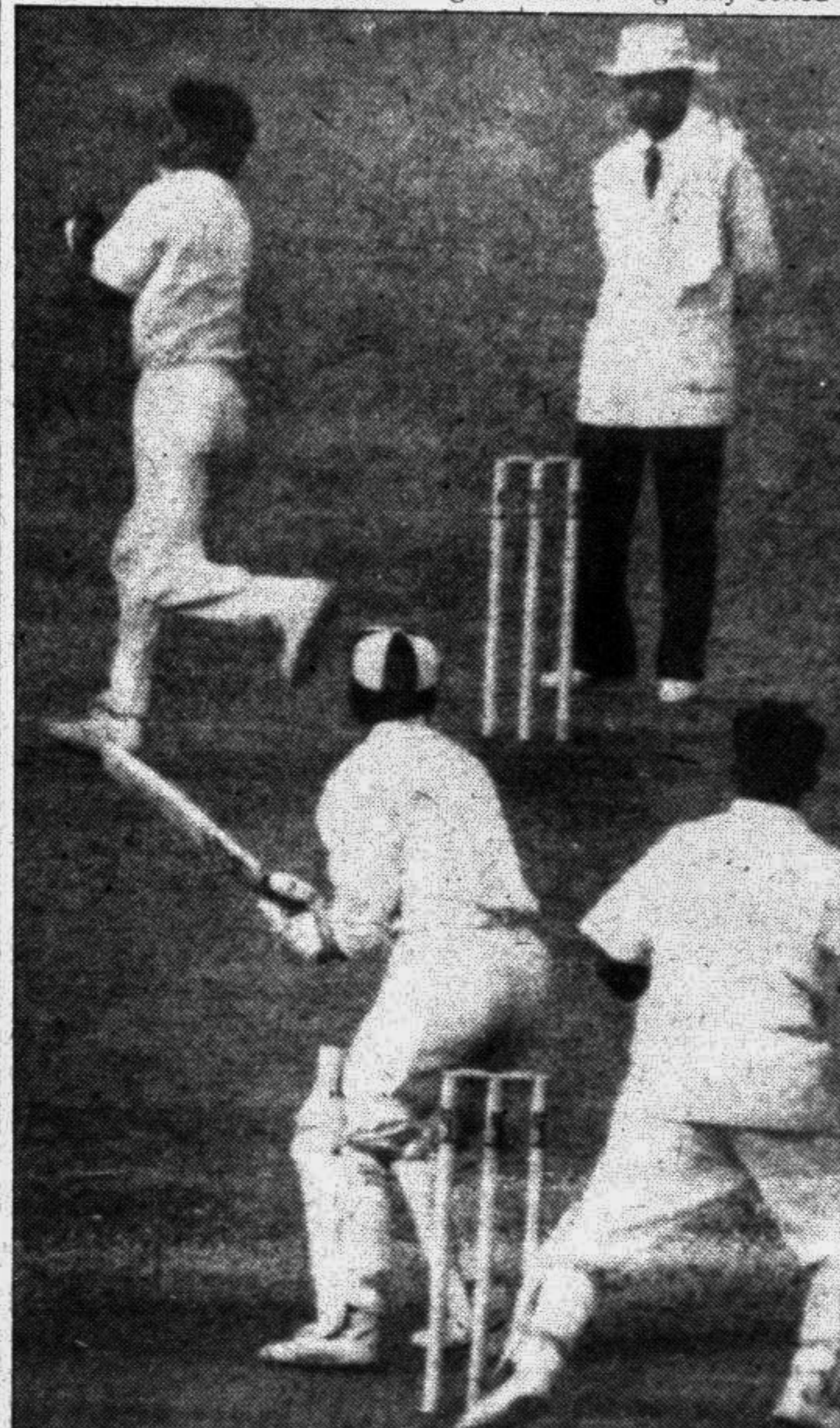
Surely they will be going flat out to repeat Monday's dream performance. On the other hand, the Indians must be smarting for revenge.

Bangladesh, who qualified for the final ahead of the Pakistanis on a better run rate, had lost to Pakistan by one wicket in the tournament opener. They then went on to beat Sri Lanka, by five wickets and India by the narrowest possible margin — of one run — on Monday.

India started the SAARC championship campaign in style, winning a narrow victory over Sri Lanka in their first match and followed it with a four-wicket win over arch-rivals Pakistan before falling to the hosts.

Had Pakistan, who began yesterday's match against the Lankans with a net run rate of -0.61, managed to score the victory target of 148 runs in

See Page 12 Col 1



Pakistan's Hamid Mahmud is caught and bowled by Upul Chandana of Sri Lanka during yesterday's SAARC cricket tournament encounter at the Dhaka Stadium. Match report on Page 11. — Star photo by A K M Mohsin

Prime Minister's National Tree Plantation Award 1993 to BTC

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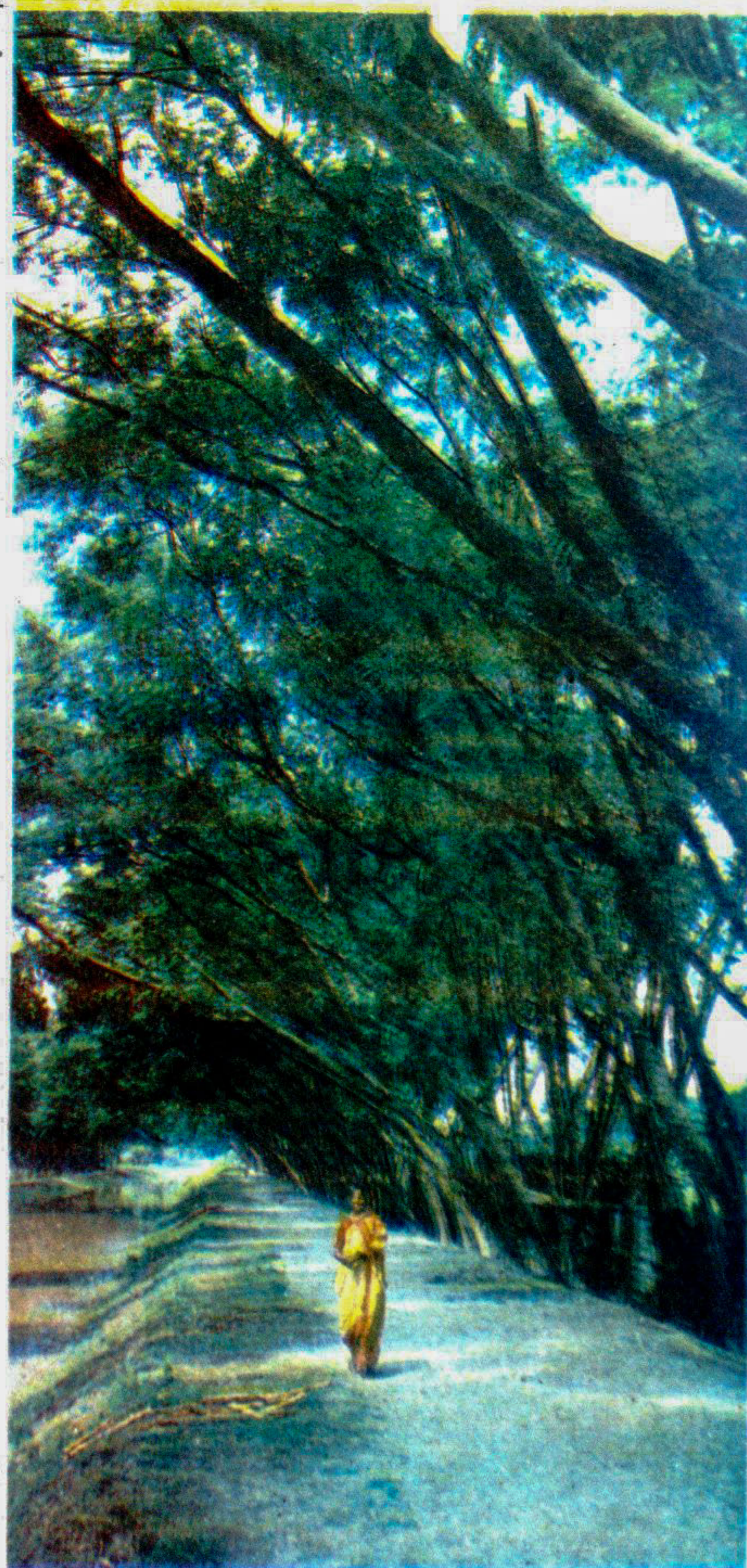
The Prime Minister's Award 1993 for National Tree Plantation bears a recognition of our concerted effort, an inspiration to carry on the mission forward, into the future.

We share this moment of accomplishment with all BTC employees and farmers whose collective and relentless endeavour has helped fulfil the pledge we made to the nation.

We also convey our congratulations to all the recipients of this award and those individuals and organizations who have, in their own way contributed to the country's afforestation.



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