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# The Daily Star

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**NEWS BRIEFS**

Fire at CMM's court  
By Staff Correspondent

Attack on motor workers' office  
From Our Correspondent SIRAJGANJ, Oct 18: Seven persons were injured when unidentified miscreants hurled cocktails at the Shahzadpur Motor Workers' Union office here today. Later, the motor workers put up barricades on the Dhaka-Dinajpur highway. As a result, hundreds of vehicles remained stranded for about two hours, Shahzadpur police said.

Mourning procession at Jessore  
JESSORE, Oct 18: A mourning procession was brought out today in the town carrying the body of Jubo League worker Babul who was allegedly killed yesterday during a clash between two rival groups of the organisation. Meanwhile, Ziaur Rahman Rintu, who was critically injured in the same clash, was sent to Dhaka today from Jessore General Hospital under police protection for better treatment, reports BSS.

One killed, 5 hurt in road accident  
From Our Correspondent RAJSHAHI, Oct 18: One person was killed and five others were injured in a road accident here this evening. According to Rajpara thana police, a truck loaded with cement hit two bicycle-riders and four pedestrians in front of the Rajshahi Christian Mission Hospital at about 6:30 pm. Tajul Islam, 27, of Mahishbathan mohalla of the city died on the spot.

## Hasina invites group of 5 for further talks

**Star Report**

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina has invited the group of five eminent citizens to meet the party leadership Saturday to discuss the persisting political crisis.

The invitation was extended when Prof Rehman Sobhan met the AL chief yesterday evening at her residence and formally conveyed the outcome of the group's second meeting with Prime Minister and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia on October 16.

The Prime Minister had earlier expressed her willingness to the group to meet Sheikh Hasina for a discussion with an open mind to find a solution to the political impasse.

Hasina told Prof Rehman Sobhan yesterday if there has to be a dialogue as stated by the Prime Minister, 'it should be on the basis of an agenda' said a press release issued last night on behalf of the group.

'The meeting between Sheikh Hasina and Prof Rehman Sobhan was held in a cordial atmosphere,' the release said.

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## 'Accept demand to pave way for dialogue'

**By Staff Correspondent**

Sheikh Hasina yesterday said a dialogue could be held if the government accepted the demand for elections under a non-party caretaker government.

"No dialogue can be held without fixing the agenda of the talks," Hasina, chief of the Awami League, said while briefly addressing a rally at Farmgate after she led a procession there from Dhanmondi.

"The present problem was not a 'problem of two leaders,' but it was a 'major political issue' to ensure free and fair polls in the country, Hasina said.

"We are not struggling for power, we want to establish people's rights to vote and food," she said and vowed to

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## Third day of hartal passes off peacefully

**By Staff Correspondent**

The third day of the opposition-called 96-hour hartal passed off by and large peacefully excepting some stray incidents of cracker explosions and chase and counter-chase between pro-hartal and anti-hartal activists in the city and elsewhere in the country. At least 29 people were injured, 7 in the city, 2 at Narayanganj, and 20 at Jessore.

Rajshahi division and vehicles carrying relief materials there were exempted from the hartal.

Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami called the hartal to press the demand for dissolution of parliament and general elections under a non-party caretaker government.

The hartal began on Monday and is scheduled to end at 6 in the morning tomorrow. The opposition parties are expected to announce their next programme for agitation on Saturday.

In the city, the day was marked by cracker explosions, chase and counter-chase and a series of separate rallies and processions by Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami. Police arrested four persons, three from Sutrapur area and one from Motijheel area.

All motorised vehicles were off the roads but rickshaws, facing almost no obstruction from the pickets yesterday were in larger

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## Shahjahan Siraj takes oath as state minister

Shahjahan Siraj MP who crossed floor into the ruling party recently was sworn in as a Minister of State last night, reports UNB.

He has been allocated the Ministry of Shipping.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas administered oath of office to Siraj, a frontline leader of the pre-independence student movement, at a simple ceremony at Bangabhaban.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia was present on the occasion.

An official announcement said President Biswas gave the appointment under Article 56 (2) of the Constitution of Bangladesh.

BSS adds: The Prime Minister also reallocated portfolios of three other ministers. Religious Affairs Minister Mohammad Keramat Ali

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## Parliamentary polls PM okays draft law to debar loan defaulters

**By Staff Correspondent**

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda has approved the Election Commission's draft law debarbing bank loan defaulters from contesting parliamentary polls, it is reliably learnt.

"Accordingly, we have sent the proposed law for vetting by the Law Ministry," Secretary of the Election Commission (EC) Irshadul Haq, said yesterday.

Law Secretary Mirza Asaduzzaman Faruq, however, told The Daily Star last night: "Till today, I have not received any file from the ministry concerned. May be it is on the way."

As soon as the Law Ministry vets the proposed law, President Abdur Rahman Biswas would promulgate an ordinance to that effect.

If the law is made, those identified by the scheduled banks as loan defaulters will not be able to contest the national level elections.

The bank loan defaulters, through a separate law, were debarred from participating in the local-level elections.

The EC had earlier made the proposal for a law to debar loan defaulters from contesting parliamentary elections.

The Awami League, while submitting its suggestions for a code of conduct for the political parties during elections to the EC in the first week of September, suggested that the bank loan defaulters should be legally

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Awami League President Sheikh Hasina leading a procession of the party at Farmgate area in the city during hartal yesterday. — Star photo

## 4 Tanzanians held with heroin worth Tk 3.6 cr

BENAPOLE, Oct 18: Some 3.6 kg heroin worth about Tk 3.6 crore and 1975 US dollars in cash were seized from four foreigners at Benapole border checkpoint today, reports UNB.

Officials said Fantus, Abdullah Selim, Rahmat Hanui and Bami Jang — all four Tanzanian citizens — were caught while crossing the border from India with the contraband.

Customs officials said the alleged drug traffickers tried to bribe them with the dollars to escape arrest.

They were taken to Sharsa thana and a case was filed against them in connection with the heroin smuggling.

This was the biggest haul of smuggled drugs in the country after the 1992 seizure of the dangerous synthetic drug in Dhaka.

American teenager, girl

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## Acting Secy Gen tells Daily Star BNP for 'concessions within Constitution'

**By Nurul Kabir**

Acting Secretary General of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) Ashraf Hossain yesterday said his party was ready to 'make concessions to the opposition, as much as possible within the ambit of the Constitution to 'avoid anarchy' in the political arena.

Ashraf Hossain, who is also a whip of the BNP's parliamentary group, made this statement two days after he had taken up as acting Secretary General of the party on Monday. He was talking to The Daily Star at his Parliamentary chamber yesterday morning.

"The BNP would make concessions to the agitating Opposition as much as possible to avoid political anarchy in the country for the sake of sound growth of the national economy," the acting Secretary General of the party said, adding, "But whatever we do, we have to do within the ambit of the constitution."

Replying to a question, the BNP leader said the Prime Minister's public announcement that she would resign 30 days before the general elections was an "undue" concession to the Opposition.

"The concession was undue because there is no constitutional obligation for the Prime Minister to step down before the polls. A peace-loving politician Begum Khaleda Zia made the announcement to avoid any sort of instability

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## Crisis can be solved if two leaders sit, says Rafiq

BNP standing committee member and Housing and Public Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Miah yesterday made a fresh call to the opposition leaders to come to an open dialogue responding to the proposal of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia for a peaceful solution to the current political problem.

Talking to BSS, Rafiq said that difference of opinion between the government and the opposition leaders regarding holding of future elections have been narrowed down. "I am sure that if both the leaders sit together, the problem can be solved amicably and peacefully for the greater interest of the country," Rafiq said.

When asked about the basis of his confidence for an

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## EC couldn't send enumerators to most of 51 enclaves

**By M Anwarul Haq**

Most of the eligible voters among the estimated 25,000 people in 51 Bangladeshi enclaves within Indian territory continue to remain deprived of full citizenship status as they have not yet been enrolled as voters, according to competent sources.

The Election Commission (EC), being unable to send enumerators to the enclaves, wrote to the Foreign Ministry for taking up the matter with New Delhi. Subsequently, a request note was sent to the Indian authorities but no reply was received, according to Foreign Ministry sources.

EC sources said that after repeated attempts, enumerators could visit Dahagram and Angorpota enclaves only recently, but till now could not enter the other enclaves. The number of voters registered in Dahagram and Angorpota for the next elections is learnt to be around 3,591.

What could be gathered is that Bangladesh has not been allowed any 'official entry' into the enclaves for voter enumeration purposes because the matter remains pending due to non-completion of the boundary demarcation between the two countries.

A senior official noted "It is a porous border. Neither sides allow enumerators to come. These people have fallen victim to the lack of understanding between the two governments."

In 1974, a Land Boundary Demarcation Agreement was signed between the Prime Ministers of the two countries.

It was then agreed that all other Indian enclaves in Bangladesh and Bangladesh enclaves in India would be exchanged expeditiously. The issue of the enclaves has been pending since the Noon-Nehru Pact signed in 1958.

According to available data with the Ministry of Home Affairs, there are 111 Indian enclaves in Bangladesh while the number of Bangladeshi

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## Dhaka takes over SAARC chamber leadership

Bangladesh takes over the leadership of the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry at its second general assembly session, beginning in the Maldives today, reports UNB.

The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) chief Salman F Rahman is due to assume as President of the chamber through a routine election on the concluding day of the three-day moot in Male.

Rahman will succeed the incumbent President, S M Inam of Pakistan.

SAARC chamber was launched in Dhaka early last year with a view to promoting private-sector trade and industrial cooperation among the South Asian countries. Inam, the former President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and

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Royal Selangor International, Kuala Lumpur, developed a solar eclipse viewer that blocks out 99.9 pc of the sun's radiation. — AFP/UNB photo

## Total solar eclipse Oct 24

**By Staff Correspondent**

The country will experience a total solar eclipse on October 24.

The one-minute-5 second total eclipse will, however, be witnessed only around Hiron Point of the Sundarbans. For the rest of Bangladesh, it will be partial.

The Bangladesh Astronomical Association says, the eclipse will begin in Dhaka at 8:04 am, reach its middle phase (95%) at 9:25:34 sec am and end at 10:51:30 sec am.

In Chittagong, the eclipse will commence at 8:05:40 sec am, reach at its middle phase (97%) at 9:25:40 sec am and end at 10:56:13 sec am.

At Hiron Point, the eclipse can be witnessed at 100% from 9:20:58 sec am to 9:22:02 sec am.

The association forecasts a very favourable weather during the eclipse.

Solar eclipse occurs when the moon lies between the earth and the sun blocking the sunlight to fall on the earth. The eclipse is total when the distance of the moon from the earth is the

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## Hand over power as Ershad did: Raushan

**By Staff Correspondent**

Jatiya Party presidium member Begum Raushan Ershad yesterday urged the BNP government to handover power to a neutral caretaker government for holding general elections.

"Handover power as Ershad did for the greater interest of the country," Raushan, wife of former President H M Ershad said while addressing a rally at Mahakhali. The rally, which followed a procession, was also addressed by Barrister Moudud Ahmed and Kazi Zafar Ahmed.

Demanding immediate release of Ershad, Raushan said it will not be good for BNP if the Opposition demonstrates in such way as was done during the Jatiya Party regime.

Party secretary general Anwar Hossain Manju and other leaders addressed another rally in front of Jatiya Press Club.

Anwar Hossain said the present political crisis could be resolved only if the government resigned accepting the demand for general elections under a neutral caretaker administration.

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## NAM summit opens: Poverty main issue

**Editorial on page 4**

CARTAGENA (Colombia), Oct 18: The 11th summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) opened here today, report agencies.

Poverty will come up as one of the most pressing issues at the summit, the leaders arriving here said.

But in the teeming slums of this port city that will host the summit for three days, wage-earners and those who fill the ranks of the under-employed, say they have little hope that the summit of 112 mostly developing nations will amount to anything more than words.

A draft of the final declaration by heads of state and government attending the summit says "poverty and marginalization have reached dramatic magnitudes in many non-aligned countries," adding that, "more than one billion inhabitants of our planet live in absolute poverty."

But virtually everyone in Cartagena — from street vendors and the unemployed, to minimum wage earners whose pay amounts to little more than 100 dollars month — says the group that Colombian President Ernesto Samper will head for the next three years has little relevance to their own desperate lives.

"It's just empty words," Maria Sanya, one of about 1,000 homeless and unemployed people including 200 children living in the city's Pedro Heredia soccer stadium, told Reuters on Tuesday when asked about the summit.

"As far as the Colombian government is concerned, the poor only exist when it comes time for elections," she said. "It hurts me to say it, but the Colombian government looks down on the poor."

She and other people living in the outdoor stadium were moved there about three months ago when their homes in one of the "misery belts" that surround Colombia's top tourist resort were destroyed by floods. The stadium has just four working bathrooms, and cooking is done on makeshift stoves perched between concrete bleachers that serve for beds.

A local telethon and government sponsored campaign raised more than

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## One beaten to death in city

**By DMCH Correspondent**

A youngman, who was severely beaten up by some unidentified men at Palashi in the city Tuesday evening, succumbed to his injuries at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) in the early hours of yesterday.

Lalbagh police said Mohammad Hossain, 23, was admitted to the DMCH after he was beaten by some unidentified men.

Meanwhile, the city chapter of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) claimed that Hossain was a JCD activist and brought out a procession yesterday protesting the killing.

**Armed clash in city: 8 injured**

At least eight people suffered bullet wounds in an armed clash between two groups at Mohammadpur in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

Local residents said the groups known as Sentu Bahini and Haris Bahini locked in the gunfight at Tajmahal Road in the evening.

Both the groups used pistol, revolver and sawed-off rifle during the fight which lasted for 45 minutes from 6:45 pm