

25 more killed in Kashmir violence

SRINAGAR, India, Oct 18: At least 25 people, including 16 Muslim guerillas, were killed in separate incidents of violence today in the Kashmir Valley, the police here said, reports AFP.

Three Muslim guerillas, a soldier and six civilians died in a gun battle that erupted between Indian soldiers and Kashmiri militants in Khurhama, a tiny suburb of Srinagar, the police said.

The encounter was sparked off during a search operation by the security forces in the area.

Residents said the soldiers also lobbed mortars into suspected hide-outs of the militants in Khurhama, but there was no immediate confirmation of the allegation from Kashmir officials.

Six militants of the dominant Hizbul Mujahideen separatist group were killed in a separate firefight with soldiers in the central Budgam district, police said.

The clash spilled into adjoining Kashmiri hamlets and

raged until late today leaving at least one soldier dead, police said adding three houses were burned down during the fighting.

In another crackdown in southern Doda, four militants and a soldier died in a gunfight.

Indian troops gunned down three Muslim militants in Anantnag, a district adjoining Doda, the police said in the Kashmir summer capital of Srinagar.

NAM summit

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700,000 dollars in cash and construction supplies to relocate or rebuild the homes of those left homeless by the flooding in the neighbourhood called "El Pozon - The Well," but none of it has been distributed so far, residents of the soccer stadium say.

"They say they have to channelize it," one disgruntled father of 12 said of the promised aid money. "They stole it."

Hasina at rally

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continue the movement till the demand was met.

The AL chief alleged that the government was making the situation volatile by resorting to "terrorism and killing" during the hartal. "It cannot stay in power through repressive measures," she said.

Sheikh Hasina said they were well aware of the inconvenience to people caused by the hartal but were struggling for the greater cause of the people.

She said that some concessions had been given to the rickshawpullers during hartal period and some other concessions would be given to others.

Hasina also addressed another rally at Shukrabad intersection.

Earlier, in another rally in front of Jatiya Press Club Awami League presidium member Abdus Samad Azad said the people have expressed their no-confidence in the government through observing the hartal.

"Dissolve parliament immediately and sit for dialogue accepting the concept of caretaker government," Samad Azad said. "A dialogue can be held then to determine who will run that government."

He declared that they would be no election under the government of Khaleda Zia.

Party general secretary Zillur Rahman alleged that the BNP had resorted to "politics of cheat and falsehood" to cling to power. "Do not push us towards confrontation. Accept the de-

mand or take the responsibilities of consequence," Zillur said.

Presided over by party's city unit general secretary Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, the rally was also addressed by among others Advocate Rahmat Ali, Mantaz Hossain, Siddiqur Rouf Khan, Sultan Mohammad Mansur, Abdus Salam Khan, Advocate Kazi Iqbal Hossain, Abdus Salam Khan, Ahsanullah Master, S M Kamal Hossain and Qamruzzaman Ansari.

Hasina invites

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press release added. The group comprising former chief justice Kemaluddin Hossain, Barrister Syed Ishaq Ahmed, Prof Rehan Sobhan, Fakhruddin Ahmed and Faiz Ahmed had its first meeting with Hasina on October 14.

The eminent citizens initiated their move through a meeting with the Prime Minister on October 9 to help resolve the ongoing political stand off over the question of holding general elections under a neutral caretaker government.

Rickshaws

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Ambulances, medicine and food shops, vehicles carrying newsmen, newspapers and relief goods, kutchas bazars, fire brigade, gas, electricity, water and conservancy services are also exempted from the hartal.

The opposition had earlier exempted Rajshahi division from the hartal in view of foods.

BNP for 'concession'

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to be created by the Opposition.

He also said he believed that if Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina would respond to the Prime Minister's readiness for a face to face dialogue, the two leaders could have come out with a positive result to end the persisting political impasse. "May be, Sheikh Hasina would be able to obtain some other concessions from the Premier."

When asked whether Begum Zia was going to write to Hasina soon, Hossain said: "The Prime Minister is really willing to write a letter, but you must admit that she reserves the right to think whether her letter would be honoured."

He also said, "The problem with the AL is that its leaders refuse to respond to our invitation even at the social level. On the other hand, they do not recognise us when we attend their social functions." He, however, declined to elaborate.

Such behaviour does not help create a healthy relationship between the ruling party and the Opposition, which is imperative for the sound growth of Parliamentary democracy, the BNP leader said.

When asked whether he sees any silver lining in the country's political horizon, with only a few weeks left for the Election Commission to announce schedule for by-elections for 141 Opposition seats in parliament, vacated on June this year, Hossain said, "Despite various limitations, I am optimistic about a solution to the present polit-

ical impasse. Besides, I believe, the group of five eminent citizens could help create a congenial atmosphere for a dialogue between the two leaders."

Replying to a question, the BNP leader said, "The AL had opted for negotiation with the illegitimate government of Gen H M Ershad in 1986 within a few hours. Can't we expect that the party would not take more than a few weeks to respond to the positive call of the democratically elected government of Begum Khaleda Zia?"

He identified both Jatiya Party (JP) and Jamaat-e-Islami as undemocratic forces and said BNP's primary objective now was to reach an understanding with the Awami League.

Explaining his views about the JP and the Jamaat, Hossain said Jamaat did not believe in the basic principles of democracy - sovereignty of the people - while the nation fought against the autocratic practices of the JP for long nine years.

"The unfortunate thing for the nation is that the AL is now agitating against a democratic government, together with two undemocratic forces," he said.

When asked how did he justify BNP's honeymoon with the Jamaat for two and a half years in Parliament, Hossain said Jamaat had supported BNP, but BNP did not take up any 'common programme' with it during those days.

The acting Secretary General of the ruling party also said the party was likely to hold a grand public rally in the capital sometime next month.



Indian movie star Sanjay Dutt (2nd R) is greeted by film producer Yash Chopra (R) upon his release from Anther Road prison in Bombay Tuesday after being granted bail. — AFP/UNB photo

Sanjay has to spend 6 hr a day in court

BOMBAY, Oct 18: Indian movie idol Sanjay Dutt, freed on bail after more than a year in prison on terrorism charges, returned to court today, swapping rugged jeans and stubble for trousers and a shave, reports Reuter.

But he seemed still dazed at his good fortune, and said little else but thanks to God. "God is great," he kept telling reporters on his first free day out of jail.

Dutt, released on Tuesday by the Supreme Court following seven unsuccessful appeals, offered monosyllabic replies as he left his suburban home for the court hearing a 1993 serial bombing case in which 260 people were killed.

Dutt, 36, is among 200 people on trial for the conspiracy behind the Bombay bombings that targeted Bombay's stock exchange and the Air India headquarters, besides other sites.

Wearing grey trousers and white shirt, the appearance of the freshly shaven Dutt contrasted with his unshaved look in jail.

After a relaxing night's sleep in his own bed, Dutt

now faces the prospect of spending six hours in court each day, in line with bail conditions imposed by the trial judge.

"Really speaking, he'll only come home to eat and sleep," said one of his household staff, who asked not to be named.

Sleep topped Dutt's mind as well. "I just want to go home," Asian Age quoted him today as saying. "Just go and sleep. I haven't sleep in a long time."

The Supreme Court ordered Dutt's release after federal police said they had no objections to his being freed on bail. His lawyers put up three bonds for 1.5 million rupees (almost 50,000 dollars) as surety.

Soon after his release, Dutt visited a city hospital to meet a teenager scarred by an acid attack in a recent case of mistaken identity. Despite her own problems, she

had prayed for Dutt's release, his father Sunil Dutt said.

"He is going to sympathise with her as someone else who has suffered as an innocent victim," Dutt's lawyer told Reuters.

Dutt gave her a cheque for 51,000 rupees (1,400 dollar) to help pay her treatment costs.

At home later, he had a tearful reunion with his long-time companion Rhea Pillai and his sister Praya and Namrata.

Dutt also met Bal Thackeray, the chief of the regional Shiv Sena Party which threw its weight behind the demand for the film star's release after taking power in Maharashtra state last March. Bombay is the capital of Maharashtra.

Dutt's arrest delayed the completion of nearly a dozen films under production. Up to 9.5 million had been tied up in these ventures.

Tension prevails in B'baria

From Our Correspondent

BRAHMANBARIA, Oct 18: The third day of the 4-day hartal passed off peacefully here but apprehension of fresh clashes between supporters of the Awami League and BNP still prevailed.

Police arrested three persons till today, wanted in the Shahnewaz Murder Case. They are: Mukhtar Hossain, Taimur and Qamrul.

Shahnewaz's brother Advocate Abdur Rab has filed a case accusing 19 persons. So far 11 other cases were filed in connection with the violence of the last two days. According to claims in these cases, property worth Tk 22 lakhs were damaged.

The district AL will hold a condolence meeting Friday for the death of Chhatra League leader Shahnewaz Monday, on the first day of the 4-day continuous hartal. It was announced by the AL here today that central leaders Zillur Rahman and Amir Hossain Amu will attend the condolence meeting.

Following massive strikes and arson in the town yesterday which left two persons critically injured, some 400 policemen and one platoon BDR were deployed in the town.

The district Jamaat-e-Islami amir and other leaders today visited the house of Shahnewaz to condole his death.

Mother, son drown

JHENIDAH, Oct 18: A mother and her son drowned in a small river in Sadar thana of the district Tuesday evening, reports UNB.

They were identified as Parul Begum, 30, of village Dighirpar and her six-year-old son Ekram.

They went to bring their cattle home from the bank of the river Fatki in a neighbouring village, Tikari, when the tragedy occurred.

Villagers said the boy first fell into the river. His mother tried to save her child, and both were drowned.

Third day of hartal passes off

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number than on previous two days. The hartal was relaxed for rickshaws from 4 pm yesterday.

A bomb was hurled at an Awami League procession allegedly from the Dental College Hostel when it was passing through Sobhanbagh in the city at about 8:30 am. The processionists dispersed, but soon regrouped and started pelting stones at the hostel. A chase and counter-chase between the processionists and hostel inmates ensued but none was injured. A vehicle was damaged at Shyamali at about 8 am.

A clash erupted at Nawabpur area at about 11 am when an anti-hartal procession and a pro-hartal procession came face to face, eyewitnesses said. Police picked up three pickets from there.

Near the Panthapath-Mirpur road intersection, a group of five young men, allegedly BNP activists, hurled at least half a dozen powerful hand bombs at pickets reportedly Awami League activists. The pickets regrouped and chased them towards Sobhanbagh.

Awami League activists, group at Farmgate, exchanged brickbats and hand bombs with BNP processionists, passing through the area chanting anti-hartal slogans in the evening. Police later escorted the anti-hartal demonstrators from the area.

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina led a procession from Dhanmondi Road No 5 at about 2:30 pm. She

briefly addressed a rally at Shukrabad and then went to Farmgate where she also addressed another rally.

Central Awami League leaders including Abdus Samad Azad, Zillur Rahman, Amir Hossain Amu, Sultan Mohammad Mansur Ahmed and city unit leader Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya led another procession from Bagabandhu Avenue to Jatiya Press Club area.

Sajeda Chowdhury and Alhaj Makkul Hossain led an AL procession at Asadgate area; Abdur Razzak, K M Jahangir and Nurul Islam Nahid at Science Laboratory area. Matiya Chowdhury at Farmgate area and Mohammad Nasim led a procession at Mahakhali area.

A Chhatra League procession came to the Press Club area at about 12:30 pm under the leadership of Enamul Haq Shameem, Ishaq Ali Khan Panna, Mahbubul Haq Shakil and Ajay Kar Khokan.

Jatiya Party presidium member and wife of former President H M Ershad, Begum Rawshan Ershad addressed a rally at Mahakhali at about 11:30 am, while party secretary general Anwar Hossain Manju addressed another party rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club in protest against the killing of a Juba Sanghati worker in Kushtia. Juba Sanghati is the youth front of Jatiya Party.

Two bombs went off in front of the Jatiya Press Club at about 1:45 pm when a Jatiya Party procession was passing through the area.

Different front organisations of JP also brought out processions in the city.

A Jamaat-e-Islami and its student front Chhatra Shibir brought out separate processions in Tophkana area at noon. Jamaat also held rally at the north gate of the Baitul Mukarram mosque in the afternoon.

Our DMCH correspondent says, seven persons were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with bomb injuries. They were Shafiq, 65, Fazlul Karim, 70, Shahjahan, 30, Mozahar Hossain, 25, Marufa, 22, Nur Mohammad, 30 and Azharul Islam, 30.

At Narayanganj, two Jatiya Party workers - Abdur Rahman and Salauddin - were injured when several bombs were thrown at a JP rally in front of party office at Bangabandhu Road.

In Chittagong, the day passed off peacefully excepting an incident of damaging a newspaper vehicle at Ambaganj at around 10 am. The driver of the vehicle was injured. Separate processions were brought out in the port city by different opposition political parties.

At Moulavibazar, there was chase and counter chase between the workers of Jatiya-atabadi Chhatra Dal and Chhatra League took in the evening when the district AL office was ransacked. Later, AL brought out a procession protesting the incident.

Tension prevailed at Feni following the arrest of former MP and Awami League's district unit general secretary Jainal Hajari. No

train reached the railway station, while sporadic incident of bomb explosions was reported.

Hartal was observed at Brahmanbaria without any major incident yesterday, but tension prevailed there. There was violence in the town Tuesday following killing of Chhatra League leader Shah Newaz by activists of a rival political party Monday.

Civil Aviation sources said 14 international flights out of 18 operated normally. The four flights cancelled were for Yangon, Singapore, Calcutta and Kuala Lumpur. Six domestic flights out of 11 were also cancelled.

Railway sources said, all trains left Kamalapur station on schedule with fewer number of passengers but there was no incoming train. But most of the trains were detained on way by pickets, the sources said.

UNB adds from Jessore: At least 20 people were injured, three of them seriously, in sporadic armed clashes between the BNP and Awami League activists at Manirampur thana yesterday.

Witnesses said the clash began when a group of pro-hartal activists attacked an anti-hartal rally in the afternoon.

Of the injured, Shahidul Islam (22), Prabr Kundu and Nazrul Islam were admitted to Manirampur Thana Health Complex with bullet and splinter injuries.

Another report said: 12 people were injured when hartal campaigners attacked the district office of Bureau of Manpower in the morning, witnesses said.

Seriously injured Narayan Chandra, head assistant of the office, was admitted to Sadar Hospital.

Bank dacoity in Jessore

JESSORE, Oct 18: Armed dacoits stormed the Bhatpara branch of Sonali Bank in Avoyanagar thana and decamped with a rifle and Tk 85,056 early today, reports UNB.

Guard of the bank said about 20 dacoits broke into the bank at about 1 am and looted the cash from the bank's strong room. They also snatched a 303 rifle with 22 rounds of bullets from him.

District SP and senior bank official visited the bank. A case was filed with the local police.

The Midnight File

Afghan forces repel Taliban offensive

KABUL, Oct 18: Afghan government forces today repelled an opposition Taliban militia offensive south of Kabul, official Kabul radio reported, describing the invaders as a force backed by Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. Earlier, a government spokesman conceded that another attempt by the forces loyal to President Burhanuddin Rabbani had failed to drive the Taliban fighters from their positions in Khairabad hills overlooking the capital, reports Reuter.

SAARC chamber

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Industry (FPCCI), was elected its first president.

The Karachi-based chamber, during its nearly two years of existence, failed to make any significant headway towards gearing up intra-SAARC trade.

However, Salman F Rahman, prior to his departure for Colombo en route to Male early this week, told UNB he would put effort to make the SAARC chamber into an effective body during his two-year tenure.

PM

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barred from contesting the national polls.

Later, the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and some other parties at a meeting with the EC in the last week of the same month agreed to the EC proposal.

The proposed law has been initiated against the backdrop of non-payment of huge amounts of loans taken from different scheduled banks.

The EC, following the consensus among the major political parties on the issue, sent the draft law for the Prime Minister's approval.

JP : Raushan

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He alleged that the ruling party was resorting to "politics of killing" to thwart the Opposition movement. "Stop repressive measures, don't push us towards the movement of violence," He said Jatiya Party will announce the next programme for agitation on Saturday.

Awar Hossain said government's move to foil the 96-hour hartal through repression went in vain.

Presided over by city unit general secretary JP Abdus Salam, the rally was also addressed by among others, Yusuf Hossain Humayun, Shah Mohammad Abu Zafar, Shameem Al Mamun, Manirul Haq Chowdhury, Mia Musa Hossain, Saifur Rahman and Mir Abdus Sabur Asud.

Enclaves

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enclaves in India is 51. The population in the Indian enclaves, comprising an area of 17,258.24 acres is estimated to be 49,356 while there are an estimated 25,055 Bangladeshi citizens in the Bangladeshi enclaves having an area of 7083.52 acres. The Bangladeshi enclaves, according to sources, are mostly located in Cooch Bihar while the Indian enclaves due for exchange are situated in Rangpur and Dinajpur.

The transfer of the sovereignty of the enclaves which are physically within the territories of the two countries would allow the enclave people to enjoy 'full citizenship status' of their respective countries. Besides, Bangladesh would stand to gain nearly 10,275 acres of territory without any compensation when the transfer of the enclaves take place, sources concerned said.

The land demarcation survey conducted by officials of the two countries started in the 70's and lingered till late eighties. It then stopped and the issue of demarcation continue to be a bone of contention between the two countries, the sources pointed out.

To solve the outstanding bilateral problems, India and Bangladesh had decided to set up a Joint Working Group (JWG) in October 1993. Headed by a Joint Secretary, JWG is meant to be a functional level forum comprising officials of the foreign and home ministries of the two countries and the BDR and the BSF. It is to hold meetings every six months.

Two meetings of the JWG have been held, the first in March, 1994 and the second in April, 1995. But, when the issue of border demarcation involving transfer of the enclaves was raised by the Bangladesh side, the Indian officials said it was outside the purview of the JWG. The issue reportedly was also not seriously addressed in any other bilateral meetings of the two countries.

A high official said: "It is in our interest to get an exchange of the enclaves."

Attack on Rajshahi City College union office: 4 JCD leaders injured

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Oct 18: Four Bangladesh Jatiyatadabi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leaders were injured when some outsiders attacked them at the Rajshahi City Government College today.

The JCD leaders were discussing at the students union office the situation arising out of the teasing of some girl students by outsiders. Suddenly, at about 1 pm some miscreants attacked them. They also ransacked the students union office.

The injured were college students union general secretary Shamsul Islam Milu, literary secretary Sadekul Islam Biplob, commonroom secretary Sajid Ahmed and Chhatra Dal leader Munir Hossain.

The JCD blame the Jatiya Party backed Jatiya Chhatra Samaj for the incident.

The principal of the college filed a case with Boalia thana.

Heroin

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Eliadah McCord was arrested by Zia International Airport customs with 3.27 kg heroin, the largest haul until then, in February that year.

Eliadah was sentenced to life term in prison by a lower court. A High Court bench released her overruling the lower court judgement, but the release was later stayed by the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

Rafiq: Crisis

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amicable solution, Rafiq referred to the moves and persuasions by different groups of people including the intellectuals, and journalists for the settlement of the impasse.

Rafiq also called upon the opposition leaders to bring an end to their "disruptive" hartal programmes forthwith considering the untold suffering of the people and serious damage to the national economy.

Criticising the prolonged hartal programme of the Opposition, he said that the working people particularly the vast number of day labourers were the worst victims of such programmes. In addition to the sufferings of the people, the hartal programme was also causing serious damage to the country's overall economy particularly the booming garments sector.

Dismissing the opposition claim that the hartal was being observed spontaneously, Rafiq said it had been spontaneous, peace loving people would not have to clash with the hartal pickets at different places including Rampura, Agargaon and Kalyanpur.

Shahjahan Siraj

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was made minister without portfolio while Shipping Minister M K Anwar was given the portfolio of the Science and Technology Ministry.

State Minister for Science and Technology Prof M A Mannan was given the portfolio of the Religious Affairs Ministry.

Solar eclipse

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shortest and lies on the same parallel with the sun.

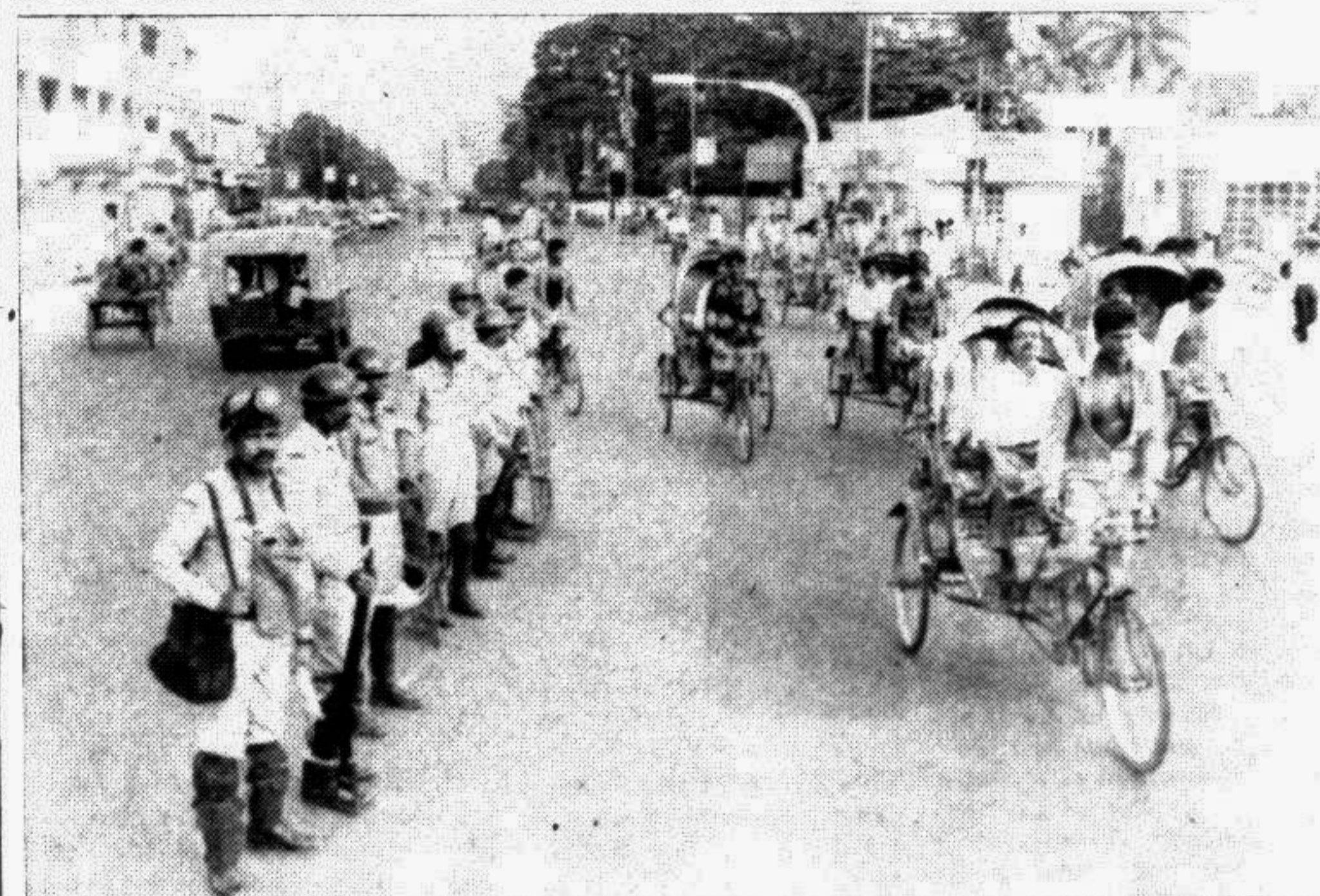
The last total solar eclipse observed in the South-eastern parts of Bangladesh was on February 16 in 1980 and the next will occur in 2009.

The whole of the sub-continent will witness a full eclipse on October 24.

The total eclipse begins in central Iran and crosses over Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, South-Western tips of Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and ends at south Pacific Ocean.

The width of the path of totality will be 20 to 45 miles while the recent eclipses were over 100 miles wide.

The partial eclipse will be seen over a distance of 2,000 miles around the path of totality covering north eastern part of Africa, the Arabian peninsula, Central Asia, the Persian Gulf, south and south-eastern Asia, China, Australia and Papua New Guinea.



City's Bangla Motor area during hartal yesterday. — Star photo

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Printed & Published by A. S. Mahmud, Managing Director, on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd, 52, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000, from City Publishing House Ltd, 90 Kakrail, Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No: 11, Road No: 3, Dhanmandi R/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 500092-4, Commercial: 500091 (Direct), Fax No: 88-02-863035, GPO Box No: 3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR