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**Dhaka Day by Day**



As some viewers eagerly wait for the result of a friendly carom game between Deputy Leader of Parliament Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury and former Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the House Abdus Samad Azad at the Bangladesh Photojournalists' Association office in the city yesterday, so also the whole nation anxiously waits to see what their (the two leaders) respective parties do to end the persisting political impasse. — Star photo

## 6-day programme begins Dawn-to-dusk hartal today

**By Staff Correspondent**  
 The opposition-called 6-day hartal programme begins with a dawn-to-dusk countrywide shutdown today. Flood-affected Rajshahi division has been exempted from the purview of the hartal. Awami League, Jatiya Party and the Jamaat-e-Islami on October 21 separately announced a week-long hartal programme from November 11 to press for holding the next general elections under a neutral caretaker government. The major opposition parties later dropped November 17 from the hartal programme and on Thursday revised the timing "in consideration of the sufferings of the people." As per the revised timing, a countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal will be observed today, the first day of the 6-day programme. For the rest five days, hartal will be observed from 6 am to 3 pm tomorrow, from 6 am to 2 pm on November 13 and for half-day on November 14, 15 and 16 in the Dhaka city. In other parts of the country, half-day hartal would be observed on November 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16. Ambulances, medicine and food shops, vehicles of fire brigade, newspaper offices, city corporations and municipalities and of electricity, gas and water supply have been exempted from the hartal programme. Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina in a statement See Page 12 Col 6

## 144 hartals in 9 months!

**By Staff Correspondent**  
 At least 144 hartals, ranging from 6 hours to 96 hours, had been called by various political parties and other organisations from January to October 1 this year. These hartals — both countrywide and at district-level — were mainly called by the opposition parties. Besides, the trade union organisations, traders, business groups and professional bodies went for hartals. In some cases, the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and its student wing Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal also called hartals at district level. The major opposition parties — Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami — since their resignation from Parliament in December '94, have been pressing for holding general elections under a caretaker government. The opposition parties, in See Page 12 Col 5

## Opposition can end crisis joining by-polls : PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday said the Opposition could constitutionally resolve the current political impasse created by themselves through their participation in the upcoming by-elections, reports UNB. "If the opposition members want to resolve the current crisis within the constitutional framework, there is an opportunity for them to join the by-elections. They can participate in the by-elections and solve the problem." Begum Zia made the remarks while talking to a group of teachers of the Jahangirnagar University who came to her for exchanging views on various issues at 30 Hare Road last night. The Prime Minister said being the majority party, the question of participation in the by-elections is not important for them (BNP). Responding to the opposition's demand, she said: "It is not possible for me to handover power to Chief Justice (CJ) and likewise it is not also possible for him (CJ) to assume the office of the Prime Minister." The Prime Minister, however, said if the Chief Justice is to be made the Prime Minister, he will have to resign first from his post, take part in the elections and win to become the leader of the majority party. Begum Zia said: "I can handover power to an MP of my party, but not to the Chief Justice, because he (CJ) is not an elected person." About the opposition's agitation for an unelected man as the Prime Minister, she again cleared her position that there was no scope for realising the demand for opposition styled caretaker government. "Nothing will be done beyond the Constitution," Begum Zia said the opposition parties want to remove the democratic government as happened in the case of the past autocratic regime. The Prime Minister reminded that the autocratic regime snatched the state power at gun point in the darkness of night, but her government has assumed power through an unprecedented fair elections. Referring to the Awami League's claim for establishing people's right to food, Begum Zia said those who keep people inside their homes, do not allow rickshaw to ply, compel shop owners to shutter down and deprive day labourers of their income cannot establish the right to food. Mentioning the opposition parties claim that hartal is democratic right, the Prime Minister said ruining the economy of the country keeping the people hostage, destruction of public and private property in the name of hartal cannot be democratic acts. The function was also addressed by Energy and Min- See Page 12 Col 6

## Blasts near BNP central office: 2 injured

**By Staff Correspondent**  
 Two persons were injured when some unidentified youths exploded several cocktails in front of the central office of BNP at Nayapaltan in the city yesterday evening, police said. The injured persons are Azharul Haq, 35, driver of a vehicle owned by a JCD leader and Abdul Kader Molah, 45, an auto-rickshaw driver. They were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. A BNP spokesman when contacted claimed that the cocktails were thrown at the party office but those blasted See Page 12 Col 3

## Hasina tells rally in city Democracy has to be 'restored again'

**By Staff Correspondent**  
 Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina has said democracy restored through the sacrifice of Noor Hossain and others could not benefit the people as autocracy has been replaced by "democratic autocracy." "People's right to vote and food has been threatened once again," she said, adding "Rigging and vote dacoity were going on in the same style as under the past autocratic regime... democracy has to be restored again." Hasina was addressing a rally yesterday afternoon in front of the party central office at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city in connection with the observance of Noor Hossain Day. Noor Hossain, a youth, was killed in police firing on November 10, 1987, when he was leading an anti-autocracy procession during the Opposition's Dhaka siege programme. Hasina blamed the BNP government for "violating" its all pledges to the people. "They have betrayed the blood of Noor Hossain and others by not implementing the joint declarations of three alliances," she said. The AL chief said their politics was aimed at building a self-reliant economy for which, she added, there must be a system of changing government through voting. "And to establish this system, people have raised the demand for general elections under a neutral caretaker government." But the BNP was not accepting the demand to rig the polls, she said. **Editorial on page 4**  
 The Prime Minister was responsible for public sufferings caused by hartals, said Hasina. "We have relaxed the hartal programme for the convenience of the people and we are also ready to withdraw the programme instantly if the government accepts the demand," she said. "What is the alternative to hartal in a democratic society?" she asked and said even the businessmen observed a 15-minute hartal seeking resolution of the political crisis. See Page 12 Col 8

## Cyclonic storm weakens: Heavy rainfall likely

The country has escaped being hit by a severe cyclonic storm formed in the Bay of Bengal as it weakened into a land depression after crossing the Orissa coast and is now centred near Cuttack of India, report BSS, UNB. Meanwhile, at least 19 persons were injured when storms lashed five thanas of Sirajganj and three villages under Muliad thana of Barisal yesterday. Met office sources said the already weakened storm is likely to move further in a north and north-westerly direction gradually losing its force. However, under the influence of the depression gusty or squally wind with 45 to 60 kph speed accompanied by heavy rainfall will continue to affect the coastal regions of Shatkhira, Khulna, Bagerhat, Pirojpur, Barguna, Patuakhali, Barisal and Bhola and the regions of Faridpur, Dhaka, Tangail, Comilla, Noakhali, Sylhet and Pabna till today, the sources told BSS yesterday evening. Maritime port of Mongla has been advised to lower danger signal number 7 and instead hoist local cautionary signal number 3. Maritime ports of Chittagong and Cox's See Page 12 Col 8



Getting Tough with Smoke-Belching Babies Page 3

**NEWS BRIEFS**

**Germany puts off Islamic confce**  
 BONN, Nov 10: Germany today put off an Islamic Conference planned for next week after parliament unexpectedly passed a vote saying Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati should be excluded. Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel said Parliament voted to exclude Velayati because Tehran had welcomed the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, reports Reuter.

**Human chain**  
 A cross section of citizens formed a human chain at Manik Mia Avenue in front of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday demanding immediate solution of the current political impasse.

**Sylhet-Sunamganj road link disrupted**  
 From Staff Correspondent  
 SYLHET Nov 10: Road Communication between Sylhet and Sunamganj remained suspended for the second day today following a series of clashes between two groups of transport workers.

**Teacher robbed in Khulna**  
 From Our Correspondent  
 KHULNA, Nov 10: A female teacher was robbed of a necklace and a wrist watch worth Tk 10,000 at around 8:30 pm today in the city. Four muggers in a auto-rickshaw waylaid Asma Khatoon, 30, travelling by a rickshaw at Iqbalnagar Road, and snatched the valuables at gunpoint.

**Shibirmen declared unacceptable**  
 From JU Correspondent  
 SAVAR, Nov 10: The All party Students, Unity (APSU) at Jahangirnagar University today declared 37 activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir, unacceptable on the campus. The APSU leaders at a press conference, here also demanded of the JU authorities to expel them from the university. The activists of the APSU earlier ransacked at least 17 rooms in two JU halls which were occupied by Shibir activists.



Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat (L) pays a condolence visit to Leah Rabin, wife of assassinated Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in Tel Aviv Thursday. — AFP/UNB photo

## Arafat visits Mrs Rabin in Tel Aviv

TEL AVIV, Nov 10: PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, making his first visit to Israel, paid a surprise condolence call late on Thursday at the Tel Aviv home of Yitzhak Rabin's widow, Leah. Israeli security sources and Israel Radio said, reports Reuter. "He was a hero of peace, but he was also my personal friend," the radio quoted Arafat as telling Mrs Rabin. "My husband regarded you as his partner in peace," she replied, the radio said. Israeli officials had asked Arafat to stay away from the funeral of the assassinated Prime Minister on Monday saying they feared for his safety. An aide to Arafat said the PLO leader flew to Tel Aviv from Gaza and spent 90 minutes with Mrs Rabin.

## DSE trading dull due to hartal

**By Sharier Khan**  
 The opposition-called six-day hartal has affected trading at the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) resulting in the decline of its market capitalisation and all-share price index, according to market operators. The country-wide hartal begins today. "We sustained political movements and hartals in the past but this time, we feel very insecure," a high official of the DSE told The Daily Star here yesterday. "Most share prices declined during the last week and trading in the last two days was notably dull." The market capitalisation fell by Tk 57 crores to Tk 5600.34 crore at the closing of the week Thursday from the previous week's Tk 5500.91. The all-share price index declined by 9.96 points or 1.13 per cent to 88.40 from the previous week's 890.41 points. The coming weeks will also be somewhat dull due to the political situation and partially because of the election of the DSE counsellors, scheduled for on December 2. According to DSE sources, the campaign for the election has already started. During the week ahead, the DSE office will be kept open but trading will not take place before Tuesday. From Tuesday onwards, trading See Page 12 Col 1

## Kashmir polls: EC rejects Rao's plan

NEW DELHI, Nov 10: India's election commission rejected today Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao's controversial plan to hold local polls next month in troubled Jammu and Kashmir state, reports Reuter. The three-member commission agreed that free and fair assembly elections could not be held at this time in the Himalayan state, where more than 20,000 people have died in a five-year separatist rebellion. "The commission has therefore decided with total unanimity that it cannot, repeat not, recommend at present to the governor of J and K (Jammu and Kashmir) the initiation of elections to the J and K assembly," it said in a statement.

## Fertiliser prices go up again as middlemen reign mill gates

**By Govinda Shil**  
 Faulty distribution system and the government policy have pushed the price of urea fertiliser up in northern districts although there is an adequate stock of the item in the country, sources concerned have said. A 50 kg bag of urea is now being sold at farmers level in those districts at between Tk 240 and Tk 275, against the government fixed price of Tk 186.25, according to fertiliser dealers. "Mill gates of the fertilizer factories have been occupied by some middlemen who are controlling the prices and sales of urea," some dealers have alleged. They urged the authorities concerned to take immediate steps to avoid "another fertiliser scandal" that may affect the winter crop. "As we can not reach the mill gates because of these middlemen, we are compelled to buy per bag urea from them at Tk 195," said a members of the Bangladesh Fertiliser Association (BFA) here. The BFA member also alleged that some officials of the urea factories were secretive about the dates of fertiliser despatch, and were keeping the authorised dealers in the dark. "Therefore, we cannot de-

## Lagos hangs nine minority rights activists

LAGOS, Nov 10: Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other minority rights activists condemned to death by the Nigerian authorities were executed today, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reported, says Reuter. NAN, quoting prison officials, said the nine men were hanged at Port Harcourt prison in southeastern Nigeria. Security and prison officials told NAN the executions were carried out around 11:30 local (10:30 GMT) after priests prayed for the condemned men. Their corpses were buried four hours later. Saro-Wiwa, who is also a noted writer and his col See Page 12 Col 8

## Debt servicing rises by over 25 times

**By Inam Ahmed and R M Titumir**  
 The country's debt servicing has increased by more than 25 times since 1993-74 because of mounting debts, expiry of grace periods and unfavourable exchange rate movements. At the same time, the per capita debt obligation also showed an increase. Total payments for debt servicing rose from 19 million US dollars in 1973-74 to 512.4 million dollars in 1993-94. It increased by 6.9 million dollars in 1993-94 from the previous year's 505.5 million dollars, according to latest ERD statistics. The per capita debt obligation of the country also in-

## 56pc pass CU BA (Pass) exams

CHITTAGONG, Nov 10: The results of BA (Pass) examinations of 1993 held in December 1994 and January 1995 under the University of Chittagong were announced on Thursday reports BSS. According to a gazette published by the university, a total of 2,611 regular candidates appeared in the examinations, of whom 1,463 came out successful. A total of 280 external candidates out of 840 also came out successful in the examinations. The percentage of pass is 56. Of the total candidates, 128 passed in the second division while 1,615 in the third division. None got first division in the examination. No candidate from 12 colleges out of 109 under the same university came out successful.