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NEWS BRIEFS

12 rescued from Bay

By Staff Correspondent

An oil tanker of the Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC) rescued 12 sailors from a sinking trawler in the Bay of Bengal on Thursday night during cyclonic storm. According to a late radio message to BSC head office, captain Hares, master of the 'Banglar Joyti' and the crew rescued the sailors from the trawler 'Sultan Mahmud' which was caught in the cyclonic storm.

Accused escapes from custody

FENI, Nov 11: An accused in a murder case who was under treatment at Sadar Hospital here, escaped from police custody at the hospital on Thursday night. Hospital sources said Belayet Hossain, 20, was arrested on November 4 with injuries and admitted to the hospital on the same day. Belayet was arrested on charge of killing school teacher Nurul Islam in a bomb attack at R M High School playground during a clash over playing football match on August 26, reports UNB.

Kashmiri leader killed

MUZAFFARBAD, Nov 11: A Kashmiri militant group said here today one of its commanders was killed when Indian troops fired on his jeep in a Pakistani area along the border on Friday night. Jamiatul Mujahideen said Abdul Ahad died as the jeep skidded off the road as it was fired on and crashed into a ravine in the Neelum Valley, also killing another man accompanying him, reports AFP.

Tornado hits Barisal village

BARISAL, Nov 11: At least 12 persons were injured and one cattle was killed when a tornado hit Kedarpur village under Babuganj thana of the district this afternoon, local authorities told BSS. Two hundred houses were damaged and a large number of amon paddy fields were destroyed by the tornado which lashed the area at a speed of 80 miles per hour.

Juba League's founding day

By Staff Correspondent
The Awami Juba League, the youth wing of the Awami League, observed its 23rd founding anniversary yesterday. The Juba League took a number of programmes to observe the day. The national and party flags were hoisted at party central office at 6 in the morning.

4 killed in other incidents 150 injured in clashes during hartal

By Staff Correspondent

Over 150 people were injured in clashes in Dhaka, Narayanganj and Khulna during the dawn-to-dusk hartal on the first day yesterday of the Opposition-called six-day programme.

In two incidents, apparently not related to the hartal, four persons including three children were killed in bomb explosions in the city during the hartal hours.

Flood-hit Rajshahi Division has been exempted from the purview of the country-wide

hartal. The four killed yesterday were identified as Mohammad Ripon, a second year student of Mirpur Bangla College; Tania, 10, daughter of a businessman; Tania, 8, daughter of an auto-rickshaw driver and Ainul, 10, a street urchin. Of them, Ripon died while making bombs, police said.

Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami called the hartal to press for holding general elections under a

neutral caretaker government.

As part of the 6-day programme hartal will be observed in the city from 6 am to 3 pm today, from 6 am to 2 pm tomorrow and for half-day on November 14, 15 and 16. In other parts of the country, half-day hartal will be observed today and on November 13, 14, 15 and 16.

In the city, besides the four who were killed, over 100 others were injured in



Farmgate area in the city during hartal hours yesterday.

— Star photo

C'wealth suspends Nigeria

QUEENSTOWN, New Zealand, Nov 11: In an unprecedented move, the Commonwealth suspended Nigeria today as punishment for its execution of nine minority rights activists and threatened to expel it unless it restored democracy, reports Reuter.

The Commonwealth, a 52-strong club of Britain and its former colonies, said in a statement issued after a day of crisis talks that the executions constituted a serious violation of its principles.

Only the Gambia, itself under military rule, and the Solomon Islands dissented from the decision, which came just a day after Nigeria ignored international appeals for clemency and hanged writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight associates.

Not even South Africa under its former apartheid regime was booted out of the Commonwealth — it walked out without waiting to be

thrown out in 1961.

Commonwealth leaders, meeting at an idyllic mountain resort, urged the government of General Sani Abacha to take immediate and concrete steps to adhere to the club's principles of democracy, rule of law and good governance agreed at their Harare Summit in 1991.

They specifically called for the release of 43 alleged coup plotters, including former head of state Olusegun Obasanjo, as well as the release of the presumed winner of Nigeria's annulled 1993 election, chief Moshood Abiola.

They further decided that if no demonstrable progress was made towards the fulfilment of these conditions within a time frame to be stipulated, Nigeria would be expelled from the association," the statement said.

New Zealand Prime Minister Jim Bolger, the summit

host, said the decision had not been taken lightly.

A Washington report says: US President Bill Clinton upset with Nigeria's execution of nine human rights activists on Friday recalled the US envoy to Lagos and imposed an arms embargo the US hopes to expand into a United Nations ban.

White House spokesman Mike McCurry said Clinton directed Walter Carrington, the US ambassador to Nigeria, to return to Washington for consultations.

He also said the US ambassador to the United Nations Madelein Albright, would begin consultations immediately on appropriate UN measures to condemn these actions.

A senior White House official said an oil embargo was for measures which could affect their oil industry. He declined to be specific but indicated this could include

AL to gear up agitation to oust govt

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League leaders said yesterday they would force the BNP government out of power by intensifying their current agitation.

AL activists will not leave the streets unless and until the people regain their right to vote and food, they said while speaking at a rally held at Bangabandhu Avenue in the afternoon, during the hartal hours.

AL General Secretary Zillur Rahman said the basic difference between the party in power and his party is that "while we are going for hartals to uphold peoples' interest, BNP and its front organisations are enforcing hartals at various places just because of intra-party rivalry."

He said police arrested many leaders and workers of the AL and its front organisations from different parts of

75 feared drowned in Teesta boat capsized

RANGPUR, Nov 11: At least 75 people, most of them children and women, are feared drowned in a boat capsized in the Teesta river near Mohipur under Gangarchhar thana in Rangpur district this afternoon, reports BSS.

According to reports, the over-loaded boat was carrying about 175 passengers, who were going to collect relief materials from Laxmichhari union of Gangarchhar thana.

The rest 100 passengers managed to swim ashore. The local authorities have started rescue operations.

Our Staff Correspondent adds: When contacted over telephone, Nezarat Deputy Collector (NDC) of Rangpur, Selim Reza, said the boat with around 50 people on board capsized in the strong current of the Teesta.

He, however, could not confirm how many of the people were feared drowned and how many managed to swim ashore.

He said that the Deputy Commissioner along with some other officials rushed to the spot immediately after the incident at around 4:00 pm.

The district administration sought help from the army in Rangpur Cantonment and an army team with a rescue boat went to the spot, the NDC said.

The people hailed from Char Joyaramouza and Char Isabkul under Laxmichhari union.

The DC was yet to return to Rangpur from the spot when this correspondent made the phone call. Gangarchhara thana could not be contacted over telephone.

Exams at night due to hartal

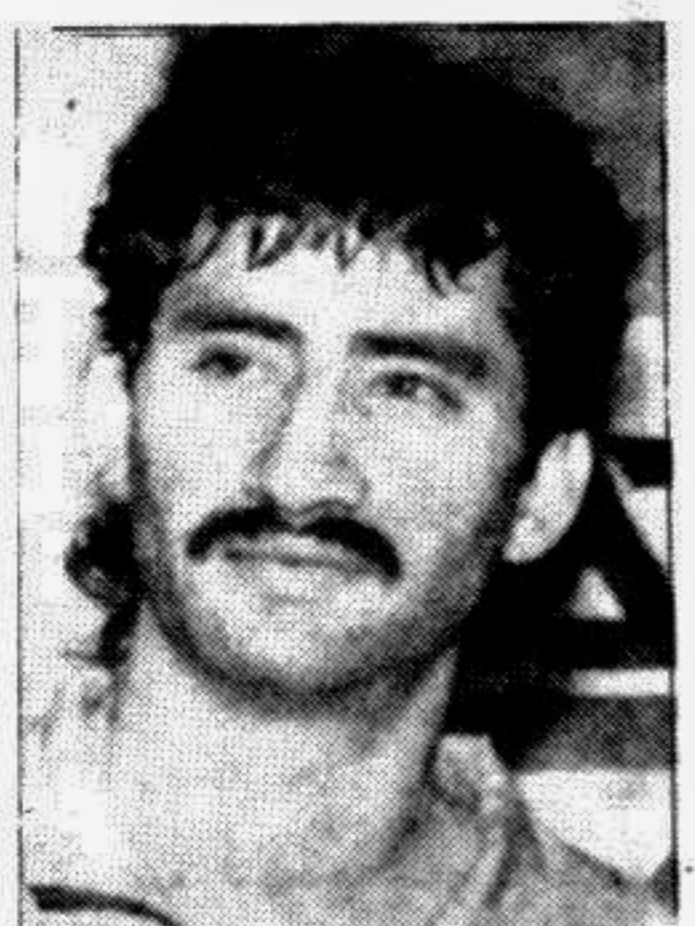
From Staff Correspondent
SYLHET, Nov 11: Authorities of the Shahjalal University of Science and Technology have started holding examinations at night on hartal days. Examinations of first year students of Social Science and Economics departments began at 7 this evening and were completed smoothly.

Examinations of the Political Science department will begin in the evening of November 14, the authorities said.

Other examinations will also be held at night and in the afternoon on hartal days.

The arrangements have been made to maintain the time schedule in the academic year and the tradition of no session-jam in the university, the authorities added.

Jansher wins record 7th World Open squash title



NICOSIA, Nov 11: Jansher Khan of Pakistan won a record seventh World Open squash title today, beating British challenger Del Harris 15-10, 17-14, 16-17, 15-8, reports Reuter.

But the Englishman gave Jansher his toughest final in seven years, saving three match points to win the third game. It took the world champion a gruelling 101 minutes to win.

The 26-year-old has now assured his place in the history books by passing compatriot Jahangir Khan's six World Open titles.

"I felt a lot of pressure," he told reporters after the match. "I am 26 and getting older by the day. If I lost now, it would be difficult to keep the momentum."

G-5 receives PM's clarification on talks agenda

Journalist Faiz Ahmed, a member of the group of five eminent citizens, called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday for certain clarification on the agenda for a political dialogue.

He, on behalf of the G-5, sought and received from the Prime Minister some clarifications regarding the agenda of the proposed dialogue between Begum Zia and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, a source close to the group told UNB.

After the meeting with Begum Zia, the group requested a meeting with Sheikh Hasina. Hasina was learnt to have indicated a sitting today.

The Prime Minister had earlier expressed her willingness to meet the opposition, reports AFP.

Police raid RU hall : 15 held

From Our Correspondent
RAJSHAHI, Nov 11: Police raided the Sher-e-Bangla Hall of Rajshahi University last night and picked up 29 students, most of whom were activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir.

Police, however, released 14 of them and sent the rest 15 to court today. No arms or ammunition was recovered during the raid, police said.

Deputy Commissioner of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP) led the raid while Provost Prof Shah Alam was present.

Islami Chhatra Shibir brought out a procession on the campus today demanding release of their workers.

Meanwhile, some unidentified youths hurled 3



A group of alleged deportees from Pakistan at ZIA yesterday.

— Star photo

Draft PPP inconsistent, vague, says MCCI

The draft of the Participatory Perspective Plan (PPP) suffers from inconsistencies and vagueness projecting exaggerated economic growth without indicating tangible sources of required investment, reports UNB.

The Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), in its latest publication, made the observation about the final draft of the PPP, which landed in controversy when the planners released it recently.

Citing limited infrastructure, poor skill levels and various policy impediments, the MCCI said the PPP's projection of growth and availability of required investment to achieve the GDP targets seemed to be exaggerated.

The plan projected a 7 per cent growth in 1997 and 8 to 10 per cent beyond 2000. It also assumed required investment for the targets of 18-20 per cent by the year

2000 and 20-23 per cent thereafter which, the chamber said, is "untenable."

The PPP, formulated by the Ministry of Planning for 1995-2010 period, was placed before the National Economic Council (NEC) for approval recently. But the NEC withheld the approval suggesting further modification to the plan.

Questions have already been raised about its relevance to the country's present socio-political and economic realities and about the basic assumptions on which the plan has been formulated.

The MCCI, the country's leading chamber, also felt that the draft suffers from unsustainable assumptions, inconsistent projections, and above all, virtual absence of any guideline for implementation of the plan agenda.

The PPP emphasises people's participation in all spheres of the country's development, but the mode and

mechanism of involving various levels (hierarchy) of local government in the process of plan formulation and implementation has nowhere been specified.

The chamber identified the document II of the plan as its "weakest" part. The relevant section on resource envelope does not contain any estimate of resource availability, it pointed out.

As the authors made the PPP essentially an indicative plan, it said, no priorities have been set, and there is no indication of how much resources will be available in different phases of the plan period.

The weak institutional setup, the MCCI cautioned, may not allow the desired growth of public savings while the projected increase in public savings is unlikely to be achieved "unless public resource management is vastly improved."

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145 alleged deportees from Pakistan arrive at ZIA

Star Report

Some 145 people, allegedly deported from Pakistan, arrived at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) yesterday.

Immigration officials at the ZIA, when contacted, said that they were obtaining statements from those people who returned to Dhaka from Karachi by a Bangladesh Biman flight.

Some sources, however, said that three airlines carrying passengers on Dhaka-Karachi route have been fined for carrying people with forged documents.

Home Ministry officials were not available for comments in this regard.

A controversy on Bengalee immigrants in Pakistan arose when Pakistani Interior Minister Nasrullah Khan Babar, in a statement in Parliament recently, alleged that a large number of illegal

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Suicide bombers attack army HQs in Colombo

COLOMBO, Nov 11: At least 252 Tamil guerrillas and troops have been killed in two days of heavy fighting in Sri Lanka, reports AFP.

Fortyseven soldiers and 188 guerrillas were killed as thousands of Sri Lankan troops resumed a massive offensive in Jaffna at dawn on Friday after a week-long lull.

Today, at least 17 people were killed in Colombo when two Tamil tiger suicide bombers carried out a stunning attack on the Sri Lankan army headquarters, sparking heavy firing by troops, police said.

Fifteen people were killed as two guerrillas of the LTTE set off explosives wired on their bodies in quick succession behind the heavily fortified army headquarters, witnesses said.

The other two dead were suicide bombers, the police said, at least 25 others, mainly civilians, were injured in the twin deafening explosions and the subsequent panic firing by the army.

The explosions as well as the firing by scores of soldiers into the Taj Samudra Hotel next to the military garrison triggered panic in this city of one million people.

Guests at the hotel reported heavy firing. Some army officers said LTTE guerrillas opened automatic gunfire from inside the hotel forcing the troops to fire back, but other officers denied this.

Hundreds of soldiers nevertheless surrounded the hotel and barged into hotels nearby, ordering guests to stay put. A police officer said soldiers were checking all the rooms.

Most of the dead and injured were civilians waiting for buses behind the army headquarters to go to the military hospital when one of the suicide bombers ran towards them and blew himself up at 9:50 am (0420 GMT).

The second suicide bomber exploded with a

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