

### Agitation until demand met, says Hasina

Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday said there is no alternative to a non-partisan neutral caretaker government to ensure free, fair and violence-free elections, reports UNB.

"We'll have to advance the current movement to its ultimate victory by realising the demand for a caretaker government. The movement will not cease until the demand is met," she said.

The Awami League president was addressing the newly elected leaders of Comilla (south) district unit of her party at the Bangladesh Bhaban in the morning.

### 15 years in jail

their another brother Shah Alam had lodged a case without naming any accused person, a press release issued by the Madaripur Legal Aid Association (MLAA) said here yesterday.

It alleged that police, on suspicion, had rounded up Sarwar on November 24, 1980, and he was later shifted to Faridpur jail from Madaripur sub-jail. Allegedly because of police atrocities, Sarwar became mentally imbalanced and was transferred to Pabna Mental Hospital.

While Sarwar was spending his days as a prisoner in the Pabna Mental Hospital, proceedings of the case in the Court of Madaripur District and Sessions Judge became stalled in 1985, said the press release.

The case is now under disposal in the court and Sarwar appealed for bail on May 30 this year. But the Pabna jail authority in a letter in August described Sarwar's condition not fitting to appear before the court.

However, Zarina Begum, the mother of Sarwar and other relations after visiting him in the jail claimed that Sarwar was in good condition and sought assistance from MLAA to get him freed.

### Child-lifters

trialist of Talia area. Seriously beaten Nizamuddin, 30, another employee of Haider, was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

Witnesses said, Rashid, Hussain and Nizamuddin were attacked by the local people when the three along with Apu, 7, son of Solaiman Haider, went to Dharmaganj in a car at around 1 pm. Seeing Apu inside the car, some people in the area suspected them to be child-lifters and beat them killing the two on the spot. The mob paid no heed to Apu's screams and shouting to clarify their position.

The mob also set the car of Solaiman Haider on fire. Police said, Apu accompanied by the three went there to have a look at the launch on river Buriganga, which his father bought recently.

The bodies were sent to the Narayanganj General Hospital morgue for autopsy. A case was registered with the Fatulla police station but, no arrest was made in this connection till late night.

### Fire Service chief suspended

shopkeepers and owners to enable them to resume their business quickly.

The Prime Minister asked the Home Ministry to form an enquiry committee to find out the cause of the fire.

She also directed the Ministry of Relief and Disaster Management to provide 11 hundred bundles of CI sheets (tin) to the affected shop owners and shopkeepers to enable them restart their business temporarily and the Dhaka City Corporation authority to immediately construct a pucca market for the hawkers at Bangabazar.

The directives came after her visit to the fire-devastated Bangabazar Hawkers' Market at Fulbaria.

The fire gutted more than 2000 shops. The affected shopkeepers

### Muggers stab female doctor in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Nov 27: A female doctor was stabbed and three other women were robbed of their golden ornaments, in two separate incidents in the city today, witnesses said.

Doctor Shelly was stabbed by some muggers who snatched her golden necklace while she was returning home through Pologround road at around 4 pm, sources said.

In another incident three women were robbed of their belongings at Nur Ahmed road at around 4:30 pm.

A group of muggers stopped the auto-rickshaw in which the women were travelling and looted their gold ornaments. The muggers fled away by exploding cocktails, witnesses said.

### Prokrichi strike ends today

By Staff Correspondent The Prokrichi-BCS Central Action Council continued their work abstention programme for the second day yesterday.

The Prokrichi began the three-day programme on Sunday for realising their 17-point charter of demands seeking reform in the civil service.

The organisation also threatened to begin a continuous work abstention from December 5 if the government fails to implement its recently placed eight proposals in line with the 17-point demand by December 4.

The Prokrichi will hold a rally at the Krishibid Institution today at 11:00 am.

### EC may wait

From Page 1 "I'll be happy if any compromise comes up."

In this regard, he emphasised on the cooperation of the opposition parties and stressed that the Opposition's stand should also be clear for conducting a free and fair election.

Asked on the prospect of a negotiated settlement of the long-persisting political stalemate, Justice Sadek said, "Where there is a will, there is a way. I think, if they (the politicians) are willing to solve the crisis, they will do so."

Another source in the EC said that they had planned for a January 9 poll date after informal contacts with different political parties and the EC would go ahead with the plan unless any dramatic development took place in the political arena. In that case, he added, the EC would like to discuss with all the political parties on the election date as per their convenience.

### Ctg-ME flight

the ceremonial opening of direct flight service between Chittagong and the Middle Eastern countries, which was a long-felt demand of the local people, the sources added.

The Biman flight on its return journey the same day will carry passengers from Chittagong and Dhaka to Dubai, Muskat and Doha.

Biman sources said a DC-10 flight would operate in this route at least once a week at the initial stage to facilitate the journey of Bangladeshi expatriates from the Chittagong region working in the Arab countries.

The passengers arriving on the opening day from Dubai and Doha are expected to be received here by the Sate Minister for Civil Aviation Major (Rtd) Abdul Mannan, Minister for Fisheries and Livestock Abdullah Al Noman, Prime Minister's special envoy Morshed Khan and other government officials, the sources said.

Meanwhile, all equipment required for handling DC-10 flights has been set in order at Chittagong airport, Biman sources said. Biman is already operating P-28 flights from Chittagong airport on the Chittagong-Calcutta and Chittagong-Bangkok via Yangon routes.



Afghan government soldiers prepare to fire a rocket propelled grenade at the Taliban militia who have opened a new frontline east of Kabul. — AFP/UNB photo

### Rly ferry services in Brahmaputra suspended

LALMONIRHAT, Nov 27: The railway ferry service between Teestamukh ghat and Bahadurabad ghat has been suspended for an indefinite period, reports UNB.

The high officials of the Railway, Water Development Board and BIWTA authorities today jointly took the decision after monitoring the water level in the river Brahmaputra.

The ferry service, connecting the country's northern region with the capital, remained suspended from November 25 following sharp fall in water level in the riverine route.

BIWTA sources said the water level fell to 3-4 feet at Kalasona in the river, a turning point of the route. At least 7 feet of water level is required for smooth journey of vessels.

Meanwhile, the BIWTA authorities have started dredging in the river to restore its navigability. A high-power dredger has already left Sirajganj for Teestamukh ghat.

### DSE market

resident Bangladeshis (NRB) to invest in the local capital market and said they can make direct investment in projects of their choice.

He suggested the NRBs to form a consortium or float an Investment Company in the UK or in Bangladesh and inject their funds in our capital market.

Peter Lee, leader of the British Trade Mission suggested if securities bond credits could be made available to construction firms.

Sultanzaman Khan said that in last three or four years the Bangladesh Stock market became vibrant and new rules and regulations made tampering difficult.

During the discussion, officials of the stock exchange as well as the securities exchange commission answered questions from the members of the British trade mission which also included a number of non-resident Bangladeshis living in Britain.

Discussions said that more professionalism and suitable technology were required for operating the two stock exchanges in lines with modern requirements. Proper dissemination of information would facilitate inflow more investments from foreigners as well as non-resident Bangladeshis living abroad.

### Life's labour lost

three lakh but also his savings which he had hidden in the safe.

Sohel, one of an estimated two thousand enterprising traders in the market, became speechless as he looked at the towering flames that burnt his hopes.

Over the years, thousands of poor street vendors as well as unemployed young people found opportunities here. It promised them their livelihood. At least one lakh people became dependent on the makeshift marketplace. But unfortunately neither them nor the authorities appear to have realised that they were sitting on a fire bomb.

"Few years ago we raised Taka 30 crore and handed it over to the then Mayor of the Dhaka City Corporation for building a permanent marketplace. But when we asked the present DCC authorities they said that they did not find any fund for constructing the Hawkers' Market," said a shop-owner.

There were also people from other trading centres of the city like Islampur and Nawabpur who rushed there on hearing the news and were stunned by its ferocity. Some of them said that they supplied the goods at Bangabazar on credit.

The market became popular during the last three years. It created a niche market by selling products of the export-oriented garments factories. The market

### Bangabazar gutted

From Page 1 that the loss would be of Taka 400 crore worth, both in cash and kind.

It was initially suspected that the fire broke out from an electric short circuit inside the Bangabazar Hawkers market at about 7 am and spread with heavy smoke in the adjacent Gulistan Hawkers market. Adarsha Hawkers market and Dhaka Mohanagar Hawkers market.

"It was a total failure of the Fire Service men to save the market," said Sohel, 28, a shop owner there. "They failed to take effective measures to extinguish the blaze." Other shop owners and people in the adjacent area also held the Fire Service responsible for the destruction. They alleged that the Fire Service men did not take action in time.

However, the fire fighters said that they faced resistance from the guards of the market when they first rushed to the spot. They said they did not want to unlock the gates of the market fearing looting by unscrupulous people.

Meanwhile, the acting Director General of Fire Service and Civil Defence was suspended following the incident.

The government constituted a one-man inquiry committee with Joint Secretary of the Home Ministry, Md Giasuddin Pathan, to probe the incident and to submit a report within 15 days.

Although Bangabazar, a two storied market, became popular to the locals as well as foreigners during the last three years, its very congested setup with timber and tin without any fire exits or air circulation inside raised questions among many customers as well as the shop-owners.

On an average, more than 40 thousand people from all walks of life including diplomats, officials and students used to avail shopping facilities there, said the shop-owners in the market.

Shamsuddin, a 65-year-old tea stall owner in the nearby Aga Most Lane, narrated how it all began in the morning. "I was reading a newspaper by the road side when I heard shoutings from inside the

market. The gates were locked from inside. I could also see smoke coming out from the tin-shed roofs. The fire brigade arrived just to find the gates closed. Inside, people were trying to extinguish the apparently small fire with buckets of water."

Shamsuddin said that when the firemen failed to get inside, they used axe to break open the gates. Some also climbed on to the roof and sprinkled water inside with a hose pipe. But meanwhile thin lines of smokes were seen coming out from different parts of the roof.

As soon as the fire spread to all directions, the fire fighters had no water and they rushed a nearby Dhaka University hall and Police Headquarter for collecting water, said witnesses.

According to shop-owners and locals, a good number of people, mostly workers, used to stay in the market at night as they were late night workers. The shops included those of export quality ready-made garments, locally made clothings, plastic goods, tailoring, shoes and accessories for garments.

Many suspected that the fire could have been a result of sabotage as the market makes brisk business particularly at this period of the year when the winter is approaching.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia visited the spot and assured the businessmen of assistance. She instantly directed the authorities concerned to sanction CI sheets and easy-term loans for the affected shop-owners. The Ministry of Relief sanctioned 1100 bundles of CI sheets last night. Representatives of the affected markets also met the Prime Minister at her office yesterday afternoon.

A number of ministers, Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, Jamaat-e-Islami secretary general Matur Rahman Nizami, Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Mohammad Hanif also visited the fire ravaged Bangabazar.

They and other political leaders including former deputy leader of the Parliament AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury and JP acting Chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury expressed profound shock at the incident.

### Jamaat's rejoinder

Jamaat-e-Islami Publicity Secretary Abdul Qader Mollah yesterday contradicted a news item creeded by UNB on the killing of a Jamaat worker at Kuladi village in Pabna on Sunday, says UNB.

In a rejoinder, he said the news is false and motivated and victim Ziaur Rahman had no link with Jamaat.

### Dr Milon's death anniversary observed

By DU Correspondent The fifth death anniversary of Shaheed Dr Shamsul Alam Khan Milon, a martyr of the anti-autocracy movement of 1990, was observed yesterday.

Dr Milon, a leader of the Bangladesh Medical Association, was gunned down by the armed hooligans of the autocracy regime on November 27, 1990 near the TSC of the Dhaka University.

Different political, social and cultural organisations observed the day through discussions, rallies, placing of wreaths on the mazar of Dr Milon at the Dhaka Medical College Compound and his memorial near the TSC.

In the morning, Dr Milon Sangsad, BNP, JSD, Jatiyatatabadi Samajik Sanskritik Sanggathon, Bangladesh Chhatra League, Jatiyatatabadi Chhatra Dal, Ganotantrik Chhatra Oikya and Milon Shishu Kishor Sangsad placed wreaths on the mazar of Dr Milon.

JCD, BCL and GCO organised rallies on the DU campus.

In the evening, Dr Milon Sangsad arranged a discussion near the TSC intersection.

Speaking on the occasion, Kabita Alam, wife of Dr Milon said a section of people are propagating that the government has allocated residence, financial assistance to the family of Dr Milon, but we are not in a position to seek help from the government for our survival.

Begum Selina Ahtar, mother of Dr Milon, said the democracy earned by the blood of Milon is not safe in our country. She urged the political parties to be more sincere to overcome the present political crisis.

### 9 militants to die in Pakistan

KARACHI, Nov 27: A Pakistani special court today ordered the death sentence for nine religious militants found guilty of murdering 25 people from a minority sect, court officials said, reports AFP.

Only six of the accused are in detention. Three, who belong to the Sipaha Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), a radical group from the Sunni Muslim majority, are at large.

The nine were convicted by the special court for suppression of terrorist activities and on the charge of killing 25 people in three attacks on Shi'ite Muslim place of worship in Karachi in March.

### Crew of foreign ship dies in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Nov 27: A foreign crew member died in a scrap ship named 'Oakwell' while it was anchored at the outer anchorage of Chittagong Port, police and port sources said.

They said the crew member had died after he fell into the hedge of the ship. But they could not give details.

### Barapukuria

From Page 1 About 10 lakh metric tons of coal will be extracted per year, the official added.

The Tk 888 crore Barapukuria Coal Mine Project is being implemented with the help of Chinese technical and financial assistance.

Installation of 11 KV and 33 KV high-tension electric lines, approach road, water supply system, and accommodation for the Chinese expert have been completed at a cost of about Tk 150 crore, the official said.

At least 80 foreign experts, mostly Chinese, more than 30 local experts and 500 to 600 workers are involved in the mine development process.

More uncertainty for the victims emerged as it was learnt that the premises never had any insurance cover.

It was not known what happened to the numerous workers who usually spent nights inside the market which is otherwise termed as a death trap. People present on the site said that all the gates of the market were locked and nobody apparently knew who had the keys. "I have seen few young men desperately trying to get out of the fire engulfed premises," said one Haroun, 30, of Siddiquebazar.

## The Midnight File

### Gingrich won't run for president

MARIETTA, Nov 27: US House of Representatives Speaker Newt Gingrich said today that he would not seek the Republican presidential nomination in 1996 ending months of speculation about his immediate political ambitions, the Georgia republican told a news conference that he reached his decision after discussing the idea with his family during the Thanksgiving holiday, reports Reuter.

### Five killed in Dhamrai road accident

MANIKGANJ, Nov 27: Five people were killed and 40 others injured when a bus skidded off the road and overturned in Dhamrai thana on Dhaka-Aricha highway today, reports UNB.

Police said traffic on the road remained disrupted for about an hour after the accident in Kalampur area at about 4 pm.

Of the dead, two were identified as Sabirul Alam, 11, and Akkas Ali, 20.

The injured were rushed to Dhamrai Health Complex, Ganoshasthya Kendra Hospital and different hospitals and clinics in Dhaka.

A case was filed with Dhamrai police.

Our Correspondent from Rajshahi adds: At least 17 people were injured in a collision between a minibus and a truck on the Naogaon-Mohadevpur highway near Kallimara bailey bridge here at about 1:30 pm today.

The injured were admitted to Naogaon Sadar Hospital and Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

### Businessmen

From Page 1 Election Commissioner Justice A K M Sadeq yesterday morning at the Election Commission (EC).

"We are toying with the idea of floating a new political party," Salman, emerging from the CEC's room, told reporters at the EC.

"We met the CEC and exchanged views on present political situation and regarding election," he said.

Replying to a question he said not only the members of the business community but other communities would also be in the party.

Salman, who earlier had expressed his desire to contest the election as an independent candidate from Dhanmondi constituency, discussed the registration of the proposed political party with the CEC, sources involved in the move said.

Salman along with two other office-bearers of the FBCCI was also learnt to have discussed the law meant to debar bank loan defaulters from the electoral race.

A draft law banning defaulters from contesting the coming polls has been finalised by the Law Ministry, and both ruling BNP and opposition Awami League have extended support to it.

The law is likely to come into force through an ordinance before the next general election, said an EC source.

### 48-hr barricade

From Page 1 mills and factories, withdrawal of 'false' cases filed against the workers and employees, payment of arrear salaries and compensation to the affected workers.

Abul Bashar regretted that the government did not implement the various accords signed so far with representatives of the workers. "We are compelled to go for agitation due to the government's indifferent attitude," he said.

He also blasted the owners of the private jute and textile mills for not implementing the Wage Commission Award.

The press conference was attended, among others, by M A Aziz, Iqbal Majumder, Shah Alam, Majibur Rahman and Belayet Hossain.

### RU strike extended till Nov 30

From RU Correspondent RAJSHAH, Nov 27: The Anti-communal Students Alliance (ACSU) today extended the on-going strike at the Rajshahi University till November 30.

The ACSU had called a 3-day strike on the campus on November 25 to press its demand for removal of Vice-Chancellor M Eusuff Ali and end to what it called terrorism by Islamic Chhatra Shibir activists.

Extension of the on-going strike was announced at a meeting of the ACSU to press its demands.

Meanwhile most of the departments of the varsity have postponed examinations till December 10.

### Opposition

From Page 1 The meeting was attended by Abdus Samad Azad and Mohammad Nasim of the Awami League, Barrister Moudud Ahmed, Kazi Zafar Ahmed and Anwar Hossain Manju of the Jatiya Party, and Abdul Qader Mollah and Sheikh Ansar Ali of the Jamaat-e-Islami.

Meanwhile, the BNP political-makers had a meeting with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia last night.

The meeting was learnt to have decided to send a reply of Sheikh Hasina's latest letter to the Prime Minister.

### Imam sacked

From Page 1 cer (TNO) and Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) on Sunday.

A press release of Samimilla Nari Samaj said yesterday, an investigation team of Mahila Parishad, Ain-O-Salish Kendra, Jatiya Mahila Ainjibi Samity and Swaptagram Nari Swanirbhar Parishad on November 20 informed the local administration about jatua and its consequence around the area.

Later, local Union Parishad Chairman Abdus Sattar informed the TNO and ASP about the salish and requested them to attend the session.

The salish found the imam, Lutfar Rahman, guilty and sacked him from his job, while his accomplice Nur Mohammad Master, teacher of Madartek Government Primary School was forgiven as he begged pardon confessing his involvement.

### Passports

From Page 1 lowing the dissolution of the Fifth Parliament on November 24.

When asked, the official said that many of the Opposition MPs though not all, had surrendered their diplomatic passports.

In any case, he pointed out, even if the former opposition MPs were retaining their diplomatic passports, they would not be able to abuse them as immigration would no longer accept their validity.

Meanwhile, only 55 Opposition MPs, out of the 104 allocated accommodation at the MP hostels have so far handed over their keys to the relevant authority.

According to the JS Secretary, 49 opposition MPs are still in possession of rooms at the hostels.

## CHEHLUM

**The Chehlum of Late Al-haj Jahurul Islam, the founder and Chairman of Islam Group, will be held on Friday, December 01, 1995. A Milad Mahfil has been arranged on this occasion at Jahurul Islam Medical College and Hospital premises at his own village Bhagalpur under Bajitpur Police Station of Kishoreganj district at 3.30 P.M. on Friday, December 01, 1995.**

**The deceased's family requests all relatives, friends, well-wishers and the members of Islam Group to attend the Milad Mahfil and to pray to the Almighty Allah for the salvation of the departed soul.**

**Editor: Mahfuz Anam**

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