

# Harsh law, poor investigation puts five men in jail

By N Rahim and T Sultan

On the morning of 30 November 1995, police arrested five men sitting with six young women dressed in school-like uniforms in a bus near Jatrabari in Dhaka city on suspicion of trafficking. The men were charged under the Oppression of Women and Children Ordinance, 1995 (1995 Ordinance), and are in jail awaiting trial. While it is alleged that these men are traffickers, further investigation reveals that they are the guardians/relatives of the young women and were accompanying the women at their request and the request of an overseas labour recruiting agency.

Months before the incident, arrangements had been made with Kazi International Recruiting Consultant (KI) in Banani (the signboard in Banani reads Kazi Training Centre) for the young women to migrate to Malaysia as garment workers. After paying between Tk 36,000-40,000, the young women received training at the KI office along with 300 others. Under the law, a woman wishing to migrate must prove she is over 18 and must obtain the consent of her guardian. Despite these restrictive regulations, KI obtained all the necessary paperwork and approval from the Manpower Bureau and

Bangladesh Overseas Employment Services Limited. On the morning of 30 November, by request of KI, the young women were going to the KI office with their guardians. On the way there, their bus stopped at a gas station, where they were spotted by a police sergeant. The sergeant thought the group suspicious because all the young women were in school-type uniforms though a few did not appear of school age. The sergeant asked the girls where they were going. The girls replied that they were going to the KI office where arrangements would be made for them to go to Malaysia. No KI representative was aboard the bus. The sergeant then asked who was taking them, and the girls pointed to the men, explaining that they were their relatives/guardians.

The sergeant took the group to Demra thana. For unknown reasons, the Demra police filed a case against the men under the 1995 Ordinance without further investigation. Under this law, trafficking is a non-bailable offense. That same evening at approximately 10 pm a KI agent went to Demra thana to show the police the paperwork, including passports and no-objection certificates,

which legitimately permitted the young women to migrate. The next morning despite the new facts obtained the previous evening, the police went ahead with the case. The case went before the court, and the men were sent to jail without bail as required by the new law. The young women were released on their own recognizance at the behest of a KI agent. They returned to their home village outside of Dhaka.

People interviewed in the young women's village say that all five men are known to be good people throughout the village. According to KI, all the young women will be sent to Malaysia. The fate of the guardians remains uncertain. If convicted under the 1995 Ordinance, the men could be sentenced to death. Human rights activists have previously pointed out that the 1995 Ordinance is unduly severe and will result in the jailing of innocent people while guilty traffickers go free. This case appears to be their vindication.

*[This article is a follow-up to the news item "Six teenage girls rescued, 5 arrested" published on 1 December 1995 in the Daily Star. It is the result of an Ahn O Salish Kendra investigation by Mr Tpu Sultan.]*



Street vendors doing a brisk business in the city selling calendars for 1996. — Star photo

# 140 symbols for JS polls announced

The Election Commission has decided to reserve symbols for the candidates nominated by the political parties/alliances so that they can use party symbol in the coming parliamentary elections, reports BSS.

The returning officers will allocate the symbols reserved by the Election Commission to the candidates of the political parties/alliances. The political parties who are interested to reserve election symbols for their nominated candidates have been asked to apply for the particular symbols as per their priority of choice to the Election Commission. The application for the election symbols must reach the Election Commission secretary, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka, by January 18, a press release of the Election Commission secretary said in the city yesterday.

The Election Commission will finalise the symbols for political parties/alliances at hearing arranged at 10 am on January 21, at NEC conference room at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, in presence of the representatives of political parties/alliances. The symbols are: 1. Aeroplane 2. Almirah 3. Anchor 4. Apple 5. Axe 6. Baitha 7. Baiyam 8. Baloon 9. Bamboo Basket 10. Banyan Tree 11. Battery 12. Bench 13. Bell 14. Betel (paan) 15. Bicycle 16. Boat 17. Book 18. Bow and Arrow 19. Bucket 20. Bullock Cart 21. Brick 22. Building 23. Bus 24. Butterfly 25. Cage 26. Camel 27. Camera 28. Candle 29. Car 30. Cart (thelegari) 31. Cauli-flower 32. Chair 33. Clock 34. Cock

35. Coconut 36. Conchshell 37. Cow 38. Cup and Saucer 39. Crocodile 40. Dahim 41. Date Tree 42. Deer 43. Dhengi 44. Duck 45. Ektara 46. Electric bulb 47. Electric fan 48. Elephant 49. Fan (hat pakhal) 50. Foz cap 51. Fish 52. Floating torch 53. Flask 54. Football 55. Frying pan 56. Garland of flowers 57. Hammer 58. Hand (panjal) 59. Helicopter 60. Hook 61. Hookkhab 62. Horse 63. Hut 64. Inkpot with pen 65. Jack fruit 66. Jhumjhum 67. Kamranga 68. Kettle 69. Key 70. Khat 71. Kite 72. Kula 73. Ladder 74. Lamp (pradipi) 75. Lantern (hurricane) 76. Lion 77. Lobster 78. Lock 79. Lotus 80. Mango 81. Matchbox 82. Mathal 83. Mike 84. Mirror 85. Moon 86. Mora 87. Mug 88. Mula 89. Onion 90. Orange 91. Palki 92. Parrot 93. Papaya 94. Peacock 95. Pigeon 96. Pineapple 97. Pinri 98. Pitcher 99. Plate 100. Plough 101. Power tiller 102. Radio 103. Railway engine 104. Rickshaw 105. Ring 106. Rising sun 107. Rocket 108. Rose 109. Row of bananas 110. Saw 111. Scales 112. Sewing machine 113. Sheaf of paddy 114. Shil pata 115. Ship 116. Sickle 117. Spade 118. Spectacles 119. Spinning wheel (Charka) 120. Spoon 121. Star 122. Suitcase 123. Sword 124. Table 125. Table clock 126. Telephone 127. Television 128. Tiffin carrier 129. Tiger 130. Top 131. Truck 132. Tub 133. Tubewell 134. Tumbler 135. Turban 136. Umbrella 137. Walking stick 138. Wheel 139. Whistle 140. Wrist watch.

# Faulty engines Drive against trucks from tomorrow

A drive begins tomorrow in the city to detect trucks with faulty engines, reports UNB.

The drive will be carried out jointly by the traffic police and the representatives of truck owners and workers. A police press release yesterday said the detection efforts will be initially concentrated in four city points: Kalyanpur, Abdullapur, Shyampur and Rayerbagh. A vehicle without any of the following up-to-date documents will face penalty: Driving licence, registration certificate, route permit, fitness certificate, insurance, tax token and governor seal. Also, trucks with hydraulic horn, invisible number plate and emitting black smoke will be charged with violation of rules.

# Hearing of Zia murder case Mar 13

CHITTAGONG, Jan 13: Chief metropolitan magistrate (CMM), Chittagong, SM Matiar Rahman has fixed March 13 for the hearing of the Zia murder case, reports BSS.

When the CMM took up the case for hearing today, Assistant Commissioner (Prosecution) Bakhteyaruddin Juiyan sought permission for fixing the date saying Kotwali police could not produce the investigation report. The CMM fixed March 13 as the next date of hearing.

# Oli sues Sangbad

CHITTAGONG, Jan 13: Communications Minister Oli Ahmed today sued the daily Sangbad accusing it of defaming himself and BNP by publishing an 'objectionable news' reports UNB.

Sheikh Mohammad Mohiuddin, Student Affairs Secretary of South District BNP, filed the defamation suit with the Chittagong Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court. The court heard the complainant and summoned the daily's acting editor K G Mostafa, editor-in-charge Bazur Rahman and Chittagong correspondent Jasim Chowdhury Shabuj.

# The Midnight File

## Arafat urges Christopher to help end crisis with Israel

EREZ, Gaza Strip, Jan 13: Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat met US Secretary of State Warren Christopher today and urged him to help resolve problems with Israel in the flashpoint West Bank town of Hebron, reports AFP.

# Hearing of Manzur Murder Case Jan 25

The charge hearing in the Manzur murder case did not take place yesterday as the principal accused, former president HM Ershad, could not be produced in the special judges court as per his physicians advice, reports BSS.

(ret'd) Shamsur Rahman alias Shams and Maj (ret'd) Kazi Emdadul Haq were produced before the court.

Although Ershad is fully cured from viral hepatitis, doctors advised that he should not be moved out of Dhaka central jail before January 18, senior Special and Session's Judge, Dhaka M A Salam said.

As soon as judge Salam took the chair, Yusuf Hossain Humayun, defence lawyer for Ershad, took the floor and stated that despite specific orders of the court, they (defence lawyers) could not meet their client (Ershad). He said since it is a critical case and started after a long gap of actual happening, lawyers must hold detailed discussion with the client for proper defence, an opportunity allowed under law.

The judge said four professors and the civil surgeon who examined Ershad on January 8, suggested him for ten days rest.

Public prosecutor Abdur Razaque Khan said accused Ershad had several rounds of meetings with his lawyers within the court premises and so the charge hearing can take place.

Because of Ershad's indisposition hearing of the case could not take place on January 2. Next date was fixed on January 25. All other accused persons — Maj Gen (ret'd) M A Latif, Lt Col (ret'd) Mostafa Kamaluddin, Lt Col

# Hartal in Barisal

From Page 1 papers under four education boards from this year and to protest the police action on a student demonstration in Barisal town on Thursday.

# Businessman

From Page 1 any details. Meanwhile, in another incident, a businessman Harunur Rashid, 25, was stabbed and robbed of Tk 15,000 at the Gabtali bus terminal yesterday afternoon.

All educational institutions and business establishments were closed during the hartal hours. Vehicles were off the road and attendance at courts and banks was thin.

Harun, a cloth trader from Chuadanga, had just got down from a bus at 5 pm when the muggers attacked him.

The students brought out chanting slogans in support of their demand. Meanwhile, the HSC candidates of the Patuakhali Government University College, Karim Mridha College and Patuakhali Women's College have called a half-day hartal for the same reason tomorrow (Sunday).

In Khepupara of Patuakhali, HSC students ransacked some classrooms of Majharuddin Biswas Degree College boycotting the test examinations.

# Faridpur

Faridpur Correspondent reports: The HSC examines brought out a procession in the town today protesting the government's decision to hold the HSC examinations with a unique set of question papers from this year.

# BNP rejects

From Page 1 ing its proposal to the Opposition. "As secretary general of the BNP, I made our proposal in clear terms. I proposed in formal meetings that an advisory council with equal number of neutral persons from both the sides would be formed vesting the executive powers to the President," he said.

They chanted slogans demanding cancellation of the decision. The processionists damaged four vehicles including a jeep of the district administration.

"Is it not enough? Do I need to write to them our proposal?" Talukdar posed the question.

Fifteen persons including the drivers of the damaged vehicles received minor injuries. The students also boycotted their today's test examinations.

# BNP faction

From Page 1 Our RU Correspondent adds: A day-long hartal was observed at Putia and Durgapur thana headquarters today demanding party nomination for Nadim Mostafa, JCD district unit president for Rajshahi-4 constituency.

Former MP Abdus Sattar Mondal has got the BNP nomination for this constituency.

Replying to a question; he said formation of the proposed advisory council was also subject to legal coverage by seeking a judicial reference by the President.

# ID card

From Page 1 process would take only about three days to complete. "First the DCs of different districts had to obtain service requisition of others under the district administration to do the job again. These officers had to start the process of finding the relevant voters and this has been consuming time," said an official of the ID card project, pointing out that until now the firms were waiting for the corrected lists.

Asked about further rescheduling of the polls, he said, "I've no comment. It's the jurisdiction of the Election Commission."

Another problem which has arisen is the big number of mistakes made at the level of composers. Hundreds of temporary composers were hired and were given a crash course for only about two to three days, another official said, adding that this has led to more mistakes.

The admission test system of Business Studies Faculty (Gha unit) will remain the same — MCQ system. The total number of the test will be 100. Questions will be set from Bengali, English and general knowledge.

Moreover, most small printers who were given the printing jobs could not finish the job in time, he pointed out.

Prof Mohammad Safi Chowdhury, the Dean of the Faculty of Science, told The Daily Star, "Some important changes will be introduced in the mode of taking admission test under Ka unit, but we are yet to finalise the changes."

Although at present some one crore ID cards are ready for delivery to the voters, the firms are now requesting the EC to take up the responsibility of the delivery.

"We do not want to deliver them because we had problems with mastans at different levels in the past while distributing the cards," said a director of a firm involved in processing of the ID cards.

The EC official admitted receiving such requests but said that it has been turned down.

They vowed to continue the on-going Opposition agitation to rid the people of the "misrule" of BNP.

It was learnt that the largest number of ID cards were distributed in Barisal division. Out of 34 lakh of voters under the division, some 4 lakh received ID cards.

# Hasina

From Page 1 AL leaders Abdus Samad Azad, Zillur Rahman, Amir Hussain Amu, Sajeda Chowdhury, Abdur Razzak, Tofael Ahmed, Sahara Khatun, Abul Hasan Chowdhury Kaiser, Ivy Rahman, Nurul Islam Nahid, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim and Obaidul Kader addressed the rallies.

A pedestrian looking at a poster, put up yesterday at different city points by the law enforcing agency personnel seeking information about illegal arms-holders, mastans, terrorists and extortionists.

The party will hold a discussion on Zia's life and works at Shilpakala Academy at 4 pm on the day.

# Task force for Ctg industrial dev soon

CHITTAGONG, Jan 13: A task force, involving concerned agencies for creating broad-based socio-political consensus for the implementation of Chittagong Industrial Development Plan (CIDP), will be formed soon, reports BSS.

This was decided today at a meeting organised jointly by Board of Investment (BOI) and Chittagong Development Authority (CDA), to have in-depth views on the final study on "Industrial development plan in Chittagong region" prepared by Japan International Corporation Agency (JICA).

Presided over by BOI Executive Chairman Dr Twofique-Elahi Chowdhury, Bir Bikram, the meeting was attended by Bangladesh ambassador in Japan Rashed Ahmed, CDA Chairman Lt Col (ret'd) Ziauddin, Bir Utam, Chairman of Chittagong Port Authority (CPA), Capt Zahidul Mahmood, Honorary Consul of Japan, Nurul Islam, and representatives of various government, semi-government and autonomous bodies and private sector organisations.

A written statement of the mayor of Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury was read out by the chief executive officer (CEO) of the corporation at the meeting.

The statement put forth some suggestions and expressed full-hearted support in this respect. Ambassador Rashed Ahmed in his discussion said the imperative need of CIDP is to make Chittagong a special economic zone (SEZ). He said, JICA undertook the study on the project in-depth and Japan wants to see a strong political will and

broad-based consensus on the materialisation of the project. He said the objective of SEZ is to promote foreign and domestic investment. SEZ will in turn be established on feasibility basis in other areas of the country, he added.

The discussants underscored the imperative need of strong political will and broad-based consensus for materializing CIDP and SEZ for greater socio-economic benefit of the country.

Malaysia lifts trade ban on Israel

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 13: In a major shift in its Mideast policy, Malaysia has decided to lift its trade embargo on Israel but has no plans for diplomatic relations soon, officials said today, reports AP.

Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad told reporters the move was in response to Israel's apparent willingness to honour its agreement with Palestinians.

"If the Palestinians and others can ... I don't see why we cannot gradually restore relations with Israel," he said.

Asked if the relations he referred to meant diplomatic ties, Mahathir said: "Not yet, as long as it (Israel) does not resolve its problems with the PLO and Syria, it is a bit difficult for us to establish diplomatic relations with Israel."

Malaysia, which is predominantly Muslim, has had no ties with Israel and had also banned travel to Israel.

directors who resigned, whether voluntarily or following instruction of the BB.

The working group will also carry out independent assessment of loan recovery procedures, internal audit systems, external audit standards, dispute resolution mechanism and will suggest appropriate recommendation for resolving loan recovery problems.

The group which is charged with looking into ways of empowering the BB with more autonomy, would review (redefine) terms of the Governor, role of the central bank's Board, powers of the central bank regarding monetary policy, management of foreign exchange, licensing of new banks and the non-bank financial institutions, supervision and regulation of scheduled and specialised banks and powers to limit domestic financing of the budget.

Regarding reorganisation plan for the BB, the working group would prepare it in consistency with the objectives of central banks as defined in the proposed legislation. The reorganisation plan would also include the establishment of a legal department.

The working group on the BB may seek technical assistance (TA) to provide an expert to assist in preparation of Bangladesh Bank legislation.

Meanwhile, the USAID has indicated that it is prepared to provide such technical assistance.

# PM's help for Ctg Press Club

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday donated Tk 15 lakh for the development of Chittagong Press Club, reports UNB.

She said her government not only gave donation to Chittagong Press Club, it had also provided different press clubs throughout the country with financial assistance.

The Prime Minister said the government ensured press freedom in the country. The newspapers in Bangladesh are enjoying full freedom.

She hoped that the journalists would reflect facts in their respective newspapers and urged them to do objective reporting so that people are not misled.

The money was granted in response to an appeal made by journalists at a meeting of Prime Minister with the elite of the port city late last year at Chittagong Circuit House.

# Huda's new formula

Former minister Nazmul Huda yesterday came up with a new formula of interim government within the framework of the Constitution and said it is sine qua non for resolving the staggering political crisis, reports UNB.

He named it 'election government' which will mainly conduct vote freely and neutrally, and the legal lacuna for forming such a government could be solved under the constitutional provisions.

According to his proposition, the President will appoint a prime minister and a ten-member cabinet comprising members of the just dissolved parliament, five each from the government and the opposition parties.

The prime minister then, under Article 55 (2), would delegate executive powers to the cabinet which would collectively exercise the powers until a new government takes over following the general elections.

"I think the opposition members who resigned from Parliament could be accommodated in the proposed government under article 56 (4) of the Constitution," he told a function at the Press Club.

He also opined that the issue of appointment of a Prime Minister could be settled by the President to form a new government. The Prime Minister may have a functional office.

The former information minister, who lost his job for his proposal for a caretaker government headed by the Chief Justice, floated the formula at a discussion meeting on Chittagong Hill Tracts at the National Press Club.

# Civil servants concerned at political crisis

Civil servants yesterday expressed deep concern at the staggering political crisis in the country and urged all concerned to resolve it soon, reports UNB.

In a statement, Bangladesh Administrative Service Association underscored the need for urgent resolution of the stalemate for the interest of national economic development, overall law and order, and congenial administrative atmosphere.

The Association, in the statement signed by its secretary general Mohammad Nuruzzaman Miah, appealed to all concerned to take necessary sincere initiatives to resolve the current stalemate for the greater interest of the state and the people.

# College girl, 3 others killed in road mishaps

By Staff Correspondent

At least four persons including a college girl were killed and 40 others injured in separate road accidents yesterday and Friday in Chittagong and Chandpur.

Our Chandpur correspondent reports: The college girl Munira Akhtar died on the spot when a bus hit her at the Chandpur bus station at around 9:45 am yesterday.

The accident occurred when Munira, a student of Chandpur Government Women's College was going to college to appear in the annual examination.

Angered by the accident, a mob damaged about 30 buses at the bus station. However, the driver managed to escape. Later mob and the students gheraoed the DC office.

Meanwhile, the college authorities have postponed the examinations.

Our Chittagong correspondent adds: Two teenage boys died on the spot and 20 persons injured when a bus carrying a picnic party from Cox's Bazar skidded off the road at Keranihat point under Satkania Friday evening.

The dead were identified as Sajal Dey, 18, and Khanchan Dey, 15.

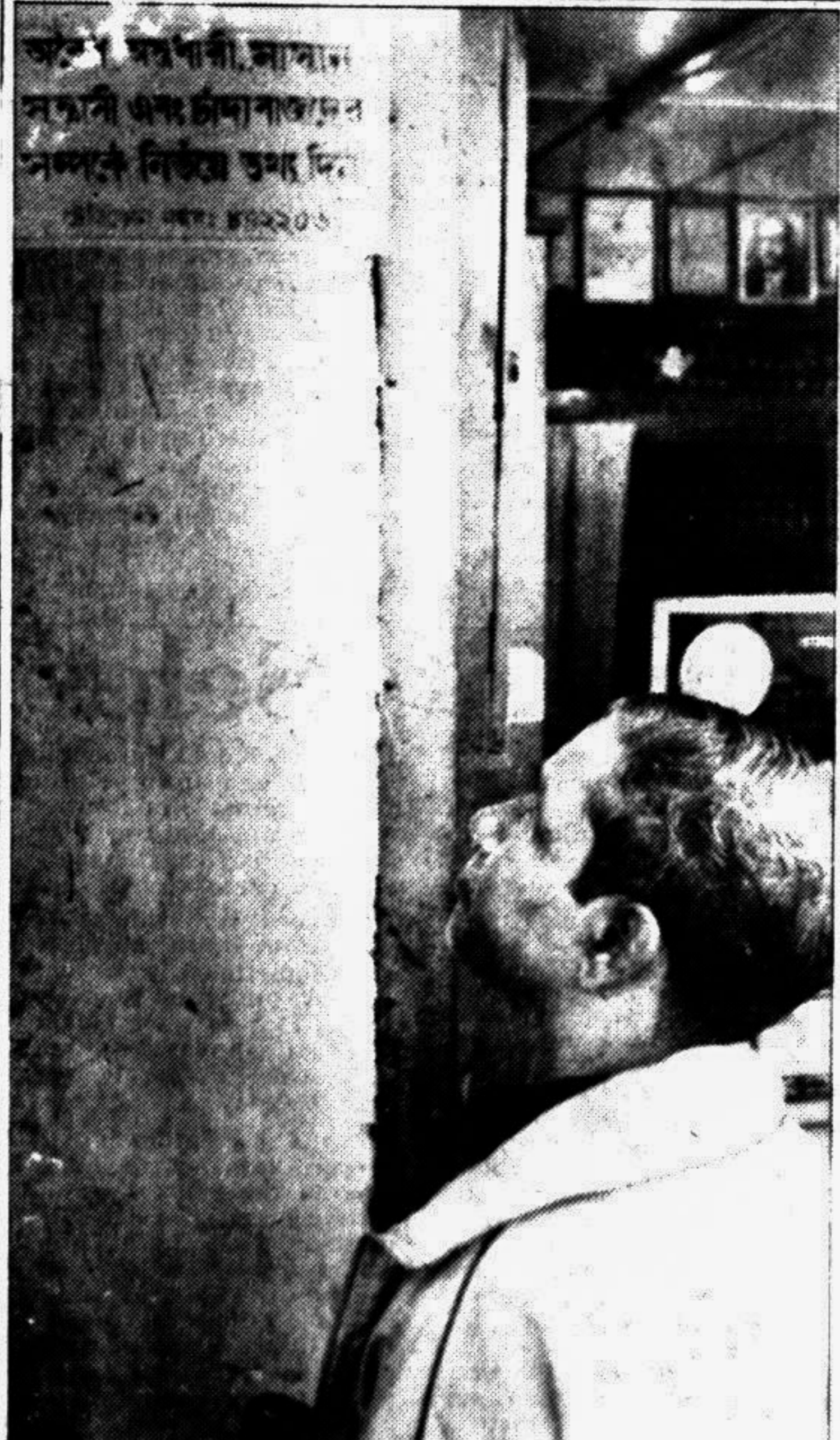
Yesterday, a rickshaw-puller was crushed under the wheels of a speeding truck at port connecting road, sources said.

# Zia's birthday Jan 19

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and its front organisations have drawn up elaborate programmes to celebrate the 60th birth anniversary of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman on January 19, reports UNB.

The programmes include hoisting of party flag at party offices, offering of fateha and placing of wreaths at the mazar of Zia, discussion, documentary film show and cultural function.

BNP Secretary General Barrister Abdus Salam Talukdar has asked all city, district, pourashava and thana committees of the party to observe the day in a befitting manner.



A pedestrian looking at a poster, put up yesterday at different city points by the law enforcing agency personnel seeking information about illegal arms-holders, mastans, terrorists and extortionists. — Star photo