

1700 trucks stranded at 3 ghats

Traffic jam at Aricha

MANIKGANJ, Feb 1: About 1,700 trucks remained stranded at Aricha, Daulatdia and Nagarbari ghats after 1,300 vehicles were ferried in 12 hours till Thursday morning, reports UNB.

BIWTC sources said the traffic congestion was created as a large number of vehicles reached the three ghats ahead of the halt in the capital called for Saturday.

They said the BIWTC ferries plying between Aricha and the two other ghats at Daulatdia and Nagarbari, could not carry more than 2,600 vehicles in 24 hours.

Drivers said perishable commodities were rotting in hundreds of stranded trucks. BSS adds, State Minister for Shipping Shajahan Siraj today asked the authorities concerned to put all-out and united efforts for ensuring smooth ferry services in Aricha Nagarbari-Daulatdia routes during the coming Eid holidays.

All possible measures must be taken so that people do not suffer in ferry ghats, he said.

The state minister was

presiding over a meeting of the officials of BIWTC, BIWTC, Manikganj district and police administration and Bangladesh Rifles here.

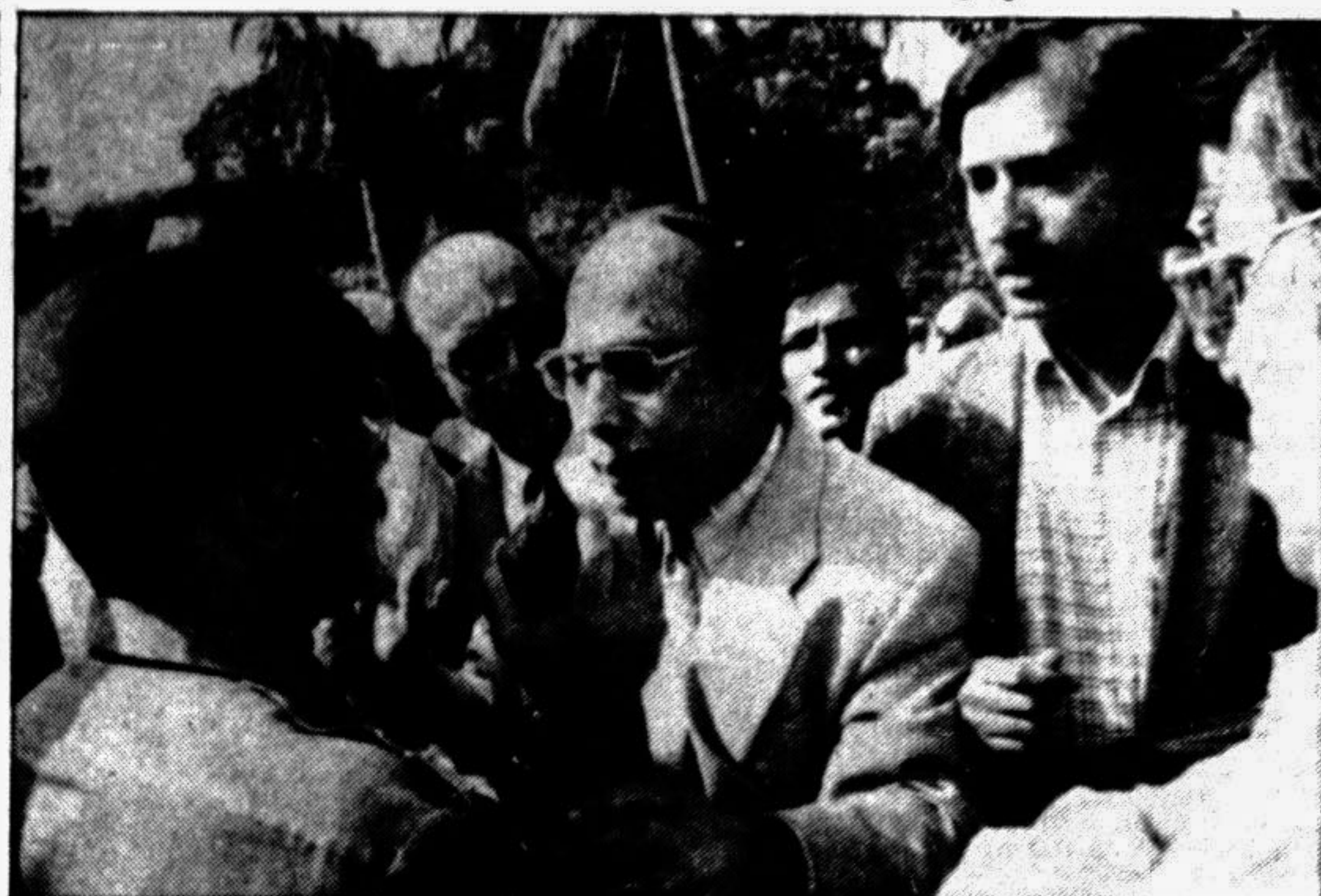
The meeting was informed that one dumb ferry, rehabilitated at Narayanganj dockyard of BIWTC, would ply on the routes by next two days. The ferry will have the capacity to carry about 150 vehicles daily.

The meeting was further informed that three platoons of BDR had been deployed at Aricha for proper management of traffic.

The state minister directed the BIWTC officials to increase the trips of the ferry so that maximum number of vehicles are ferried on the routes.

Later, the state minister visited construction work of an alternative exit route of vehicles at Aricha.

He also formally opened a vehicle terminal to be used by BIWTC at Uthaly, five kilometres from Aricha towards Dhaka. The terminal will accommodate about 200 vehicles and help reduce traffic jam of Aricha terminal area.



Police obstructing a silent procession of the Dhaka University teachers in the TSC area yesterday brought out protesting police action on Jagannath Hall students Wednesday. — Star photo

DU teachers

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The police on duty halted the procession when it reached the DUS cafeteria near the Teachers' Students' Centre (TSC). The teachers' procession was scheduled to end at the Central Shaheed Minar after marching through the TSC and Doel Chattar areas.

Police intercepted the procession at the TSC intersection as the road which heads towards the Bangla Academy was closed because of the Prime Minister's scheduled visit to inaugurate the Ekushey Book Fair at 11 am.

At one stage, the teachers, sat on the street. The sit-in demonstration was held for about 20 minutes.

In the afternoon, the DUTA apex forum of the DU teachers, adopted 10 resolutions to protest and condemn the police 'atrocities' in the university campus.

The DUTA resolution condemning the police role noted that police stopped the teachers' mourning procession at the TSC while allowed the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) to hold their noisy procession on the road in front of the Bangla Academy.

The DU teachers also decided not to participate in any programme at the Bangla Academy during this month and urged the other professional socio-cultural organisations to take similar decisions.

Gulf War returnees
Biswas assures distribution of compensation

By Staff Correspondent
President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday assured the members of the Kuwait-Iraq Repatriated Bangladesh Association (KIRBA) of directing the ministry concerned to distribute the compensation, approved by the UN.

KIRBA in a press release said that the assurance was given when a team of the Association's Barisal divisional unit met the President yesterday morning.

Police action at DU condemned

By DU Correspondent

Different socio-cultural organisations and student bodies yesterday condemned the police attack on the students of Jagannath and Salmullah halls of Dhaka University on Wednesday.

They demanded immediate release of the arrested students and exemplary punishment to those involved in the incidents.

Sammilata Sangkritik Jote condemning the 'heinous' attack demanded resignation of the Home Minister.

Coordinating Council for Human Rights in Bangladesh protesting the attack demanded judicial inquiry into the matter.

Bangladesh Awami Ainjibi Parishad condemned the incident and said that the brutal attack on the students reminded them the brutal act of the Pakistan Army in '71.

Some 25 elected members of the DU Senate in a statement condemned Wednesday's police attack. They demanded resignation of the Home Minister and the Vice Chancellor of the university.

Bangladesh Chhatra Union held the university authorities responsible for the 'heinous' attack on the 'innocent' students and demanded release of the arrested students.

Bangladesh Chhatra Moolitya in a protest rally yesterday condemned the attack. Muktiyoddha Chhatra Command condemning the brutal police attack on students in DU halls demanded compensation for the injured students.

Theatre in a statement condemned the incident. Ain-O-Salish Kendra condemned the illegal assaults and brutalities committed upon the students of Jagannath Hall.

Law Review demanded judicial inquiry into the police attack. Chittagong Hill People's Council condemned the brutal and barbaric attack on the students by the law

enforcing agencies.

UNB adds: Samridha Bangladesh Andolan convener Salim F Rahman has condemned the incidents on Dhaka University campus which should be avoided to observe great Ekushey with due solemnity.

The sanctity of the holy month of Ramadan, the sanctity of the university and of Ekushey February have been violated completely ignoring the sentiment of the people, he said in a statement yesterday (Thursday).

Hartal at DU

By DU Correspondent

Awami League-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League enforced a half-day hartal at the Dhaka University yesterday protesting the heinous police attack on the students of the Jagannath and Salmullah halls of the university.

No classes and examinations were held yesterday and the university buses did not ply. Students belonging to different organisations including BCL wore black badges.

The BCL activists brought out a procession on the campus and demanded immediate release of those arrested during the police attack.

At a rally they also demanded exemplary punishment to those responsible

35 students released

By DU Correspondent

Thirty five students among the 95 arrested during the raid on the Jagannath and Salmullah halls of the Dhaka University Wednesday were released yesterday after they were produced before the court, according to University sources.

The rest of the arrested were sent to the Dhaka central jail.

Probe body on Sonargaon incident soon

By Staff Correspondent

A joint committee to probe into Tuesday's incident at Sonargaon Hotel will be formed soon, according to State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Abdul Mannan.

"A two-member team from the Pan-Pacific Singapore office will soon arrive in the city to work with two local members," said the minister yesterday.

Meanwhile, the Japanese Ambassador in Dhaka held an hour-long meeting with Abdul Mannan yesterday at the latter's office. Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan, Managing Director of Hotel International Limited (HIL) Mosharrar Ullah, and an official from the Home Ministry were present at the meeting.

After the meeting, the Japanese envoy told The Daily Star that the two sides talked about how to resolve the problem amicably. He did not give any details.

Later, the Minister of the Japanese Embassy in Dhaka, S Takahashi, when reached over telephone, said, "We deeply regret what had happened at the Sonargaon Hotel. But that incident will not affect the long established relationship between the two countries. I do hope this matter will be handled in that direction."

Asked if the incident would have any impact on Japanese investment in the country, he said, "I think if and only if Pan Pacific Hotel withdrew from the management of the hotel, which is a very symbolic project between the two countries, it might affect in one way or the other the Japanese investment or economic cooperation."

Meanwhile, Tejgaon police said the bail petitions of the 28 arrested employees of the hotel were rejected yesterday.

Police is still guarding the hotel.

Some shopkeepers, on condition of anonymity, told this correspondent that many of them favoured the idea of keeping the market open on hartal day as an expression of gratitude to the government's monetary support in rebuilding the gutted market.

Meanwhile, only two weeks after reconstruction of the four markets at the Bangabazar, gutted in a fire on November 27, over 100 shops in the market were burnt and looted again January 29.

Unions of the markets were negotiating with the authorities for a permanent security arrangement with Ansar personnel on guard. Presently, a group of 15 to 20 policemen were guarding the markets on a temporary arrangement.

5 injured in factory fire

By Staff Correspondent

A fire broke out at a paint factory at Golapbagh under Demra thana in the city yesterday leaving five people injured, three of them seriously.

Karuna, 18, Kamrul Huda, 60, and an unidentified woman received first degree burns while the two others were identified as Bulu, 30, and Mannan, 24. They were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

A chemical reaction reportedly sparked off the fire at about 11:30 am, said the locals who rushed the victims to the hospital.

However, fire service sources said that the cause of the blaze could not be known immediately.

Meanwhile, in another fire incident, some documents were burnt in the office of the ADM at the DC office at Sadarghat in the city yesterday afternoon, fire service sources said.

The fire broke out in an open shelf in room no 14 at the DC office, sources said, adding that the officials extinguished the fire in a short time.

However, officials of the DC office could not be contacted for details.

N'ganj clash

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processions at different parts of the town including Narayanganj-Demra bus stand, Narayanganj-Dhaka bus stand, rail gate area, Ukil Para, Chashara Square and Court area.

Critically injured Jubo League leader Jahangir Alam, 37, Rabin Faroque, 27, Tanvir, 27, and BCL leaders Kamrul, 28, Apan, 25, Helal, 28, and Mithu, 23, were admitted to the local clinics.

Meanwhile, the city Jatiya Party held a meeting in front of the party office presided over by its president Nasim Osman.

However, nobody was arrested and no cases have been filed.

Hasina

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country from "repression" by the BNP government, the Awami League chief told the editors and called upon the people to intensify the current movement for vote and food.

The meeting was also addressed by the Observer editor Prof MA Munim, Independent editor Mahbul Alam, Akker Kagoj editor Kazi Shahed Ahmed, Khabar editor Mizanur Rahman Mizan, Bhorer Kagoj editor Matruur Rahman, Inqilab editor AMM Bahauddin, Rupali editor Mustafizur Rahman and Danik Janata editor Asadur Rahman.

Ittefaq editor Anwar Hossain Manju and Al-Amin editor Alhaj Moqbul Hossain also attended the meeting.

Awami League leaders Abdus Samad Azad, Abdul Mannan, Abdul Momen, Zillur Rahman, Tofael Ahmed, ASM Kibria, Abdul Jalil, Suranjit Sengupta, Mozaffar Hossain Paltu, Matia Chowdhury and Prof Abu Saaved were present.

The Midnight File

Israel, Syria end preliminary talks

WASHINGTON, Feb 1: Israeli and Syrian negotiators ended preliminary talks Wednesday on reaching a peace agreement and plan to submit ideas to their leaders, the US State Department said. In a statement released here, US special Middle East coordinator Dennis Ross said the session "had significantly advanced the discussion of key issues in a future peace treaty and clarified each side's views and needs", reports AFP.

Alleged torture victim files complaint

By Staff Correspondent
A victim of alleged torture during the on-going arms recovery drive yesterday filed a complaint with police against some members of the army.

Mamun Sarwar, Dipu, former General Secretary of the Ganatantrik Chhatra Union, filed the complaint at the Sabujbagh thana against three army officers and others deployed in the area.

An officer of the Sabujbagh thana confirmed that a general diary, Case No-56, was filed by Dipu who alleged torture by the army personnel.

A resident of Khilgaon Tilpapara, Mamun Sarwar said in his complaint that a contingent of the army "ransacked" his residence "in the name of recovering illegal weapon," at about 2-30 am on January 13.

Despite no recovery of arms he alleged, the army personnel arrested him without any warrant and took him to the Taitala Community Centre, the local army station where he was extensively tortured until January 15.

Mamun Sarwar said that he was released two days after his arrest on intervention by his ailing mother and an uncle who, he complained, were forced to sign on a sheet of white paper.

Bangabazar

From Page 1

contacted. Ramna thana, however, could not confirm it.

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Meanwhile, only two weeks after reconstruction of the four markets at the Bangabazar, gutted in a fire on November 27, over 100 shops in the market were burnt and looted again January 29.

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Stagnation

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tor banks non-performing. Another BIDS research fellow, Dr Abu Abdullah pointed out a stagnation in agriculture in 1991-94 fiscal after a modest growth of 2-3 per cent during the previous five years and blamed it mainly on faulty supply of fertiliser and crunch in irrigation expenditure.

Prof Rehaman Sobhan, Executive Chairman of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, said the real crisis was that people were not aware of the stagnation in crop production since 1989-90 and there was no indication from the government or the donors.

He also pointed at the absence of government strategy to cope with the crisis. And still there is no planning for facing such a crisis in future, he said.

Prof Muzaffar Ahmed, who carried out the education part of the CPD review, observed that qualitative investment in education and health sectors remained low while a huge investment took place for quantitative expansion.

Giving reasons of the devastating river erosion the experts pointed.

Construction of barrage in the upstream of the river across the country, increased number of motorised boats in the river and sandy soil in the banks were the reasons for the erosion, experts said.

Working hard to need biggest family

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DUBAI, Feb 1: A father of 22 sons and 20 daughters says he is working hard to head the biggest family in this Gulf Arab country, reports Reuter.

"If God wills, I may get 60 sons," Salim Juma Mubarak, who says he is in his forties, told The Daily Khaleej Times.

The United Arab Emirates national lives with his three Indian wives and 42 children under one roof in the Emirates Ras al-Khaimah. Three babies are due within the next three months. He has four ex-wives.

He says he follows the tenets of Islam and never lives with more than three wives at a time "the paper said of the man who works as a muezzin, calling the faithful to prayer."

"His family would have been larger had nine boys and girls not died shortly after birth," it said.

The man reputed to hold the record in fathering children was Ramess II of ancient Egypt who ruled from 1304 BC to 1237 BC, is said to have fathered 200 children.

Poetry festival

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Syed Shamsul Haq opened the festival on behalf of Begum Sufia Kamal, who was unable to attend due to illness. Syed Haq read out a message of Sufia Kamal. In his speech, Haq said the Parishad was committed to defending poets, as well as others' right to free speech and expression.

Violence in city

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was reported to the Motiheel thana. The PMG's work and the routine work of the GPO were suspended at the advice of police upto 1 pm, he added. A case in this regard was also lodged with the thana.

A top official at the GPO said that the people got panicked following the attack and some of the workers had left after the bomb attack.

Motiheel police said they have arrested some people in that connection and interrogation was progressing while writing of this report. They, however, could not give any detail in that regard.

Meanwhile, Abdullah, a rice trader, and his driver Badsha Miah received bomb injuries when unidentified gang threw three bombs to his car passing through Chankharpoor area at about 12 am.

In other incidents of erosion, Zahur and Sujan suffered bomb injuries in Mohakhali, Shabbagh and Bakshi Bazar areas in the afternoon, DMCH sources said.

Petrol bombs were thrown at a passenger bus at Bangabandhu Avenue and consequently the bus caught fire, reports an agency quoting the fire service sources. The firemen extinguished the fire but the vehicle suffered severe damage, the report adds.

Besides, mob set fire to a Pajero jeep at Bijnayagar, a private car near Hatirpool crossing and an auto rickshaw in front of Sonargaon hotel at around noon yesterday.

The private car was set on fire when it was parked near a diagnostic centre in the area. The owner of the car was inside the centre for collecting some reports at the time, witnesses said.

Agitated youths burnt the motorbike of a police sergeant at Bakshi Bazar crossing.

Besides, two minibuses were partially damaged in front of the House Building Finance Corporation office at Purana Paltan at around 11:30 am. The incident spread panic in the area while the police on duty chased the attackers, witnesses said.

An autorickshaw was damaged in front of the building of Muktiyoddha Sangsad in Motiheel area in the morning.

Hartal observed at Nalchhiti

JHALAKATHI, Feb 1: A dawn-to-dusk hartal was observed today at Nalchhiti thana headquarters here protesting the death of an opposition worker after his arrest, reports UNB.

The Party and other opposition parties enforced the day-long shutdown after Ashraf Ali, a Jubo League worker, died in custody here on Tuesday.

During the hartal hours, business establishments, banks and other offices remained closed while all vehicles were off the roads.

PM opens book fair

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maintaining the democratic process, because it believes that democracy gets its firm footing through the flourishing of hundreds of schools of opinion. "Now an absolute freedom of expression is prevailing in the country."

Referring to the annual book fair being organised by the Bangla Academy, Begum Zia said the book fair became the centrepiece of union of writers-publishers, educationists-learners.

People irrespective of party and opinion through the fair and exchange their views, she said and hoped that such exchanges would further strengthen the atmosphere of tolerance.

She said education is necessary for practising science and knowledge and flourishing of talent. From this realisation, she said, the government has given top priority to education since the beginning.

"Book is the main medium of knowledge. A book can sustain thousands of years. Book hands down science, knowledge, thought and spirit of a society to the next generation. The present generation knows thousand years old history, tradition and society from book," the Prime Minister observed.

"We need more books, improved publications and

spread of massive books so that the readers get all kinds of books ready in hand," she said laying importance on arranging more book exhibitions.

She informed that the government had taken measures to hold book fair nationwide alongside the Ekushey book fair arranged every year marking Shaheed Day, the anniversary of martyrdom for Bengali language in the great Language Movement of 1952.

Begum Zia said attaching importance to book, the government had formulated national book policy with the objective of publishing books of international standard and exporting Bangladeshi books to international market.

She lauded the role of the Bangla Academy for its efforts in publishing quality books for the development of science, knowledge and talent.

Begum Zia in her seven-minute written speech paid rich tributes to and recalled the sacrifice of the heroic sons of the soil who laid down their lives in the language movement, War of Liberation and establishing and safeguarding the democracy.

Before the inaugurations, one-minute silence was observed showing respect to the martyrs of Language Movement.

Series of processions

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Large contingents of riot police, BDR and plain clothesmen set up security rings around the Bangla Academy since Wednesday night.

Police cars were seen patrolling the DU roads while vehicles with water cannon stood parked near the TSC.

All roads leading to the campus was closed and only people having invitation as well as those belonging to the ruling party were allowed inside the venue.

Even the photo journalists of different newspapers were barred, leaders of the Bangladesh Photo Journalists' Association alleged in a statement.

Activists belonging to the pro-BNP Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, who had earlier announced that they would face the protesters, also took positions around the Academy premises apparently in their bid to block any procession.

The JCD workers, however, left their positions immediately before the PM arrived and police replaced them.

The first procession came out at about 9-30 am when the female students took to the streets with black head-gears, badges and black flags.

The procession paraded several campus roads but were blocked by the JCD workers near Madhu's Canteen and in front of the university library.

A procession of the left-leaning Democratic Students Union went to the Milan Chattar at about 11-10 and hoisted black flag.

DU teachers brought out a silent procession at about 10 am and staged a sit-in near the TSC road crossing.

At about 11-45 am, shots were fired in the TSC area. Police swung into action and used tear gas canisters and batons to disperse the mob. They also chased several processions, campus sources said.



Two students were arrested from the TSC area yesterday.

Agitators set ablaze a bus in Gullistan area, a jeep at Purana Paltan, a police motor-bike at Bakshi Bazar area and a private car at Segunbagicha.

Police tear-gassed the crowd and used batons which left nearly a dozen injured.

After the inauguration of