

7 Indian troops killed in Kashmir gunfight

SRINAGAR, Apr 20: Seven Indian soldiers and two politicians were killed in Kashmir today in a sudden outbreak of violence ahead of India's general elections, police and officials said, reports AFP.

The soldiers were killed in a fierce gun battle with Muslim militants near the town of Kupwara near the Pakistani frontier, a police spokesman said here, adding the fighting was still raging.

An army officer said the troops had killed six militants in the firefight.

The gun battle began in the morning and is still continuing. Brigadier P P S Bindra said here "we have killed at least six militants, many of these militants had infiltrated from Pakistan to disrupt the polls."

The incident was one of the worst flare-ups yet in Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state which will go the polls next month to pick six MPs to federal parliament in New Delhi. Indian general elections are due in April-May.

Earlier, unidentified gunmen killed two Muslim members of the pro-India national conference party in Kupwara town, police said in this summer capital of Kashmir state.

The victims were identified as Mohammed Sultan Tantray

and Ghulam Rasool Magray. It was not clear why the two were killed as the national conference has decided to boycott the ballot.

On Friday, an unspecified number of gunmen stormed the house of Wali Mohammed Wani, a candidate of the Awami Tehrik Party, at Baramulla town, nearly 65 kilometers (40 miles) north of here, and shot dead his brother.

They asked for him and not finding him there opened indiscriminate fire killing his brother," the police spokesman said.

The Awami Tehrik is a new political party founded by former Muslim militants and is contesting all the three parliamentary seats in the Kashmir valley.

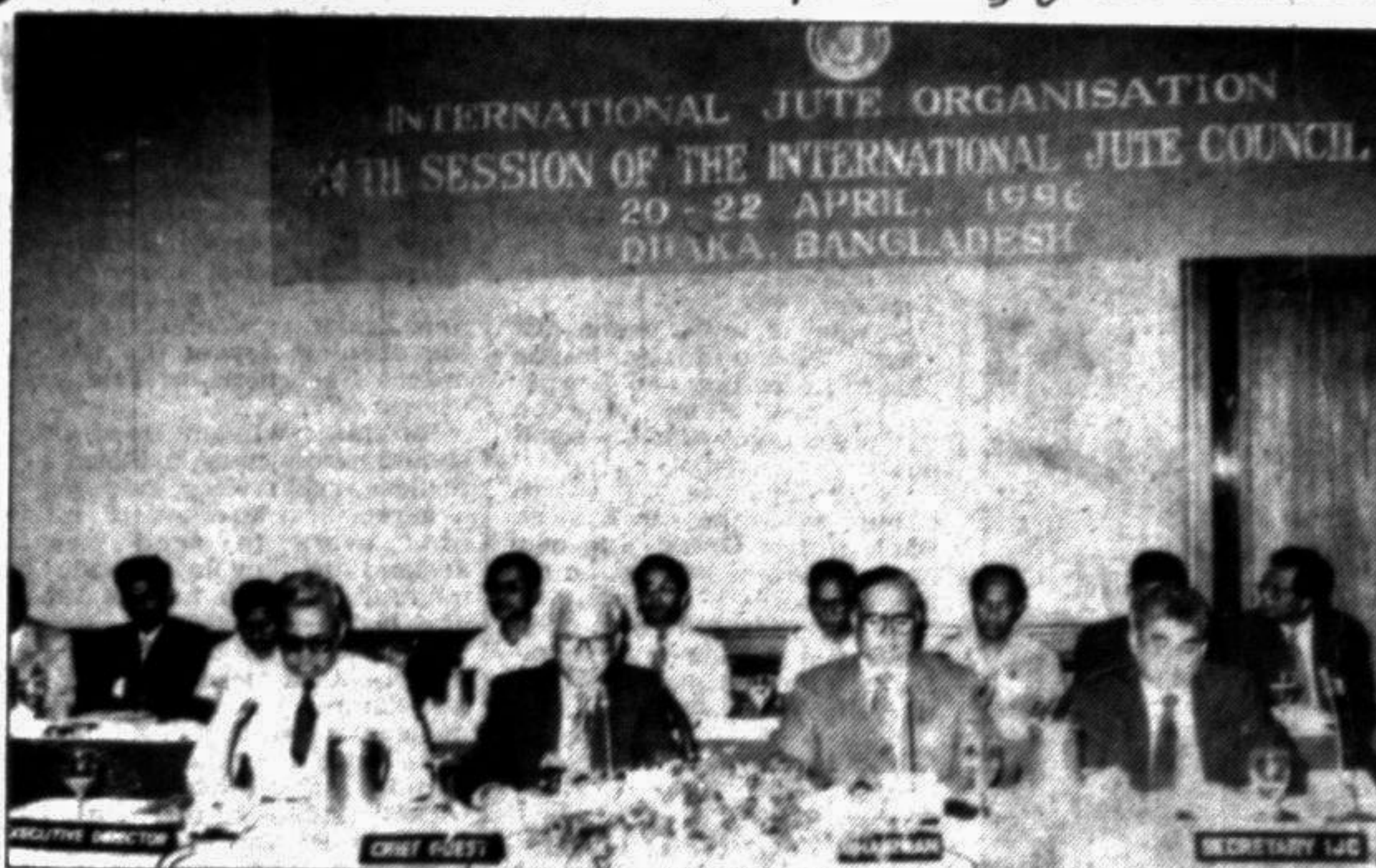
Food poisoning

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The DU authorities have formed a medical team. Two ambulances of the university were engaged to ferry the sick students to the hospitals.

The manager of the dining room went into hiding after the incident.

DU Vice Chancellor Prof Emajuddin Ahmed and some other teachers of the university visited the hall and the sick students.



Adviser to the Ministries of Industries, Commerce, Jute and Textiles Shagufta Bakht Chaudhuri inaugurated the 24th session of the International Jute Council at a local hotel in the city yesterday.

— PID photo

9 killed, 40 injured in road accidents

By Staff Correspondent

At least nine people were killed and 40 others hurt in five road accidents in the city, Chandpur and Barisal yesterday and Friday.

Our DMCH Correspondent says: At least five people were killed in four road accidents in the city yesterday and the day before.

Two bi-cycle riders were fatally wounded when a minibus hit their bike in front of the Joy Kali Mandir, Sutrapur around 7:45 am. The victims, who could not be identified, were rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), where they died immediately after the admission, according to sources.

Police impounded the minibus, but the driver managed to escape, police added.

Another person was killed when a speeding truck, knocked him down on Mazar Road under Mirpur thana at 8:20 am, police sources said.

The body of the unidentified man was sent to the DMCH and a case was filed with the Mirpur thana.

An unidentified male, aged about 30, was seriously wounded when a minibus ran him over in front of the Bangabhaban at 8 am yesterday. He was admitted to the DMCH, where he succumbed to his injuries in the afternoon.

In another accident, one Mohammad Shahjahan, 35, was critically injured when a speeding tempo overturned in front of the Sonargaon Hotel Friday night. He was admitted to the DMCH where he died yesterday morning.

Our Barisal Staff Correspondent adds: One child was killed and 10 others were injured in a road accident at Gournadi thana of Barisal district yesterday afternoon.

The accident occurred when a Barisal-bound passenger coach fell into a ditch crushing one Shahinur, 10, under the wheels of the bus.

Driver of the bus managed to flee. A case has been filed with the Gournadi thana.

UNB adds from Chandpur: Three people were killed and 30 others injured in a road accident at Baburhat on Chandpur-Comilla road yesterday.

The accident occurred when a Chittagong-bound bus hit a minibus while trying to overtake the vehicle at about 5 pm.

The dead were identified as Abdul Bari, 40, Mujibur Rahman 15, and Sirajul Haq, 40.

Of the injured, 12 were admitted to Chandpur Sadar Hospital. Three of them were reported to be in critical condition.

Members of some professional groups meet Khaleda

A 33-member delegation of Conscious Professional Groups yesterday met with BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia and discussed with her various aspects of the next general election, reports UNB.

During the two-and-a-half-hour meeting at the BNP office at Kakrail, they also discussed with Begum Zia the issue of unity of nationalist forces ahead of the election, party sources said.

The delegation comprising doctors, engineers, lawyers, journalists, university, college and school teachers assured the BNP leader of their full cooperation in carrying forward her party programmes.



Mahbubur Rahman ICC Bangladesh Chapter chief

By Staff Correspondent

The Paris-based International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) has opened a Bangladesh chapter with Mahbubur Rahman, a former president of the FBCCI, as its President, said a press release yesterday.

The local unit — ICC Bangladesh — has formed a 17-member executive committee with two vice presidents, namely, Latifur Rahman, Managing Director of Transcom Ltd and former president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and A Rob Chowdhury, former president of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Founded in 1919, the ICC serves global business by promoting trade and investment following the path of free market economy. The ICC is a world body of private sector ventures comprising thousands of companies and business associations in about 140 countries.

Hasina hosts tea party for foreign envoys

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday hosted a tea party for the diplomats based in Dhaka.

The tea party hosted at the Panda Garden was attended by heads of missions of the United States, United Kingdom, India, France, Sweden, China, Russia, Canada, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Egypt, Pakistan, Bhutan, Thailand, Indonesia, Poland, Turkey, Brazil, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Romania, Iran, Denmark and Belgium. The resident representatives of the UNDP and IMF in Dhaka also attended the party.

According to AL sources it was a friendly get-together where the AL chief and senior party leaders exchanged greetings with the members of the foreign diplomatic corps.

Dean of the Diplomatic Corps Mohammad Shahta Zarab said the AL chief thanked everyone for attending the tea party and also sought the blessings of every one before her departure for Hajj.

Senior Awami League leaders who were present at the party included Abdus Samad Azad, SAMS Kibria, Sajeda Chowdhury, Tofael Ahmed, Amir Hossain Amu, Matiya Chowdhury, and party General Secretary Zillur Rahman.

The Midnight File

6 killed in Delhi hotel blast

NEW DELHI, Apr 20: At least six people were killed and 25 injured when a powerful bomb demolished a hotel in the heart of the Indian capital, the Press Trust of India reported, reports AFP.

Strict measures

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culating the country's population growth at 2.4 per cent per year from the 1991 census, reported to the EC in January this year that the total above 18 population in December 1995 stood at 5,88,16,616.

"If you deduct the Statistics Division's figure from our number of 5.63 crore, you will find that 95.77 per cent voters have been registered in the present voters' list," said an EC official.

According to the EC figures, there are 2,85,29,311 crore registered male voters in the country while the number of female voters is 2,77,99,872.

The registered female voters constitute 96.76 per cent of the eligible female voters and the registered male voters 94.86 per cent of the eligible male voters, EC sources said.

The EC has recently launched a drive to update the voters' list before announcing the election schedule for the next parliamentary elections.

It has directed its field level officials to visit all places under their jurisdiction and make on-the-spot enrolment, cancellation or correction in the voters' list.

Hanif's added

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am accepting Mayor's leadership as our leader. Just gave him the responsibilities for eight seats in Dhaka. If he takes this responsibility there is no power on earth to stand in our way to victory."

Reciprocating, Hanif told the delegates, "Don't look at the faces whoever gets party nomination. Just care for the 'boat' symbol. It is very natural that some people will get nomination and some others will not. Work for the party. Only work will be counted. Hanif also outlined plans for election campaign in the city.

22 Rohingyas

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Teknaf police. Mohammad Ameeruddin, Additional Superintendent of Police, told UNB that all measures have been taken for the burial of the recovered bodies.

Local sources said some 200 Rohingyas have taken shelter in Bangladesh territory in last two weeks. On the other hand, in last three weeks, BDR pushed back some 167 Rohingyas who trespassed into Bangladesh territory.

A total of 2,52 lakh Rohingyas took refuge in Bangladesh in 1991-92. Of them, some 53,000 are still housed in eight camps awaiting to be repatriated to their homes in Arakan province of Myanmar. Others have already returned.

CEC to meet

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from the political parties, the civil administration, the law enforcing authorities and the people in general, it will never be possible to conduct a free and fair election," Abu Hena said.

"Although I had some worry about the updating of voters' list now I have nearly completed all preparations regarding the coming elections," the CEC said. He added that he had lot of other things to address, but due to time constraint in view of the constitutional provisions, it was not possible to do so.

A TASTE APART.