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Deve Gowda faces problems from within

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DSE MARKET

DSE price index 2100.96(-2.65%)
Market capital Tk 15192.07 cr
Transactions in volume 194148
Transactions in value Tk 553 cr

CSE MARKET

CSE price index 968.28(-1.14%)
Market capital Tk 12399.87 cr
Transactions in volume 26505
Transactions in value Tk 10515995

NEWS BRIEFS

Moon sighting body meets today

A meeting of the National Moon Sighting Committee will be held at 6:15 pm today at the Islamic Foundation Conference Room, a press release of the Foundation said yesterday. State Minister for Religious Affairs and Chairman of the National Moon Sighting Committee Moulana M Nurul Islam will preside over the meeting. All have been requested to inform the news of moon sighting to the following telephone numbers: 9556407, 9558337, 9550280, 9559493, 9559643, 9555947 and 9555951, reports BSS.

President opens IJO HQ bldg tomorrow

The inauguration ceremony of the newly-constructed headquarters building of the International Jute Organisation (IJO) will be held tomorrow morning at 145 Moulapur Road in the city. President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed will inaugurate the building as the chief guest, reports BSS.

By-polls: AL invites applications

The Awami League has invited applications from candidates willing to contest the by-election from the Thakurgaon-1 constituency of the Jatiya Sangsad.

The candidates have been advised to collect application forms for Awami League nomination from the party's central office at Bangabandhu Avenue between 9 am and 5 pm every day till January 14.

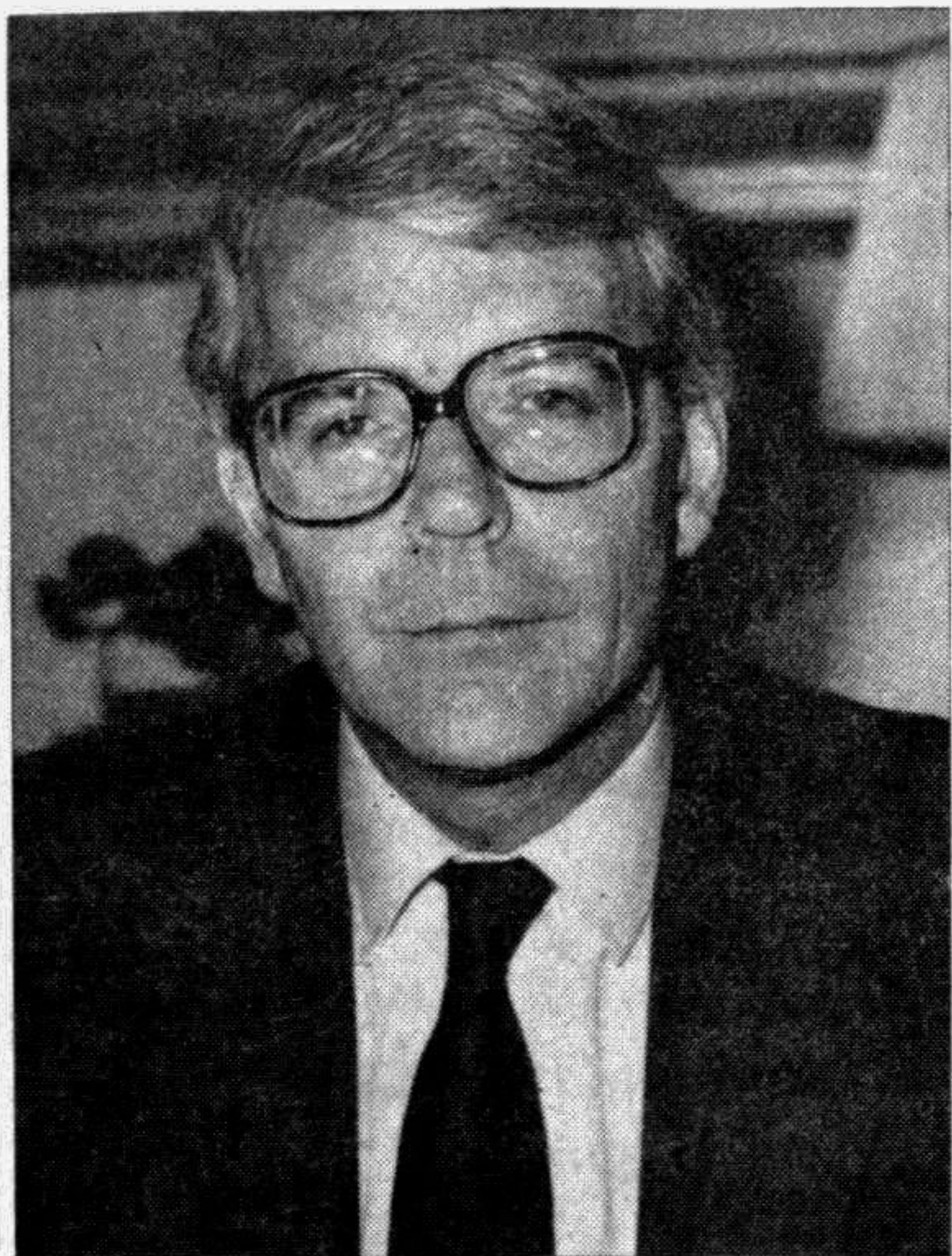
Application forms can be procured against Taka 500 each. Taka 5000 will have to be deposited along with the application form, says a party press release. Interview of the nomination seekers will be held on January 15.

Cold claims 2 in Sirajganj

SIRAJGANJ, Jan 9: Shivering cold claimed two lives in Kazipur and Chauhal thanas of the district in the last two days till Wednesday. The deceased were identified as Rustom Ali, 62, of Shakpal in Chauhal thana and Osman, 60, of Nishchintapur in Kazipur thana, reports UNB.

Welcome, John Major

Visit to boost trade, investment



British Prime Minister John Major

By Staff Correspondent

Boosting British investment in the industrial and energy sectors will figure prominently at the official talks during British Prime Minister John Major's visit to Bangladesh.

Major arrives in Dhaka tonight at 10:45 pm on a three-day official visit. He will be accompanied by his wife Norma Major. He will be staying at the residence of the British High Commissioner in Dhaka.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will receive the British Prime Minister at Zia International Airport when he arrives by a special flight. Major would be arriving from India to Bangladesh on the second leg of a three-nation tour.

Editorial on page 4

that will later take him to Pakistan.

The British Prime Minister's entourage will include some leading businessmen.

The visit is being considered important as it would seek to strengthen further the existing bilateral trade and commercial links between the two countries.

In addition to holding official talks with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, John Major will witness the signing of an agreement between Cairn Energy/HBR Energy, two British firms, and Petrobangla on gas purchase and sales from the Sangu gas fields. It is Bangladesh's first offshore gas field.

See Page 12 Col 1

Plan for sub-regional grouping

Worse than 25-yr slavery treaty, says Khaleda

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Begum Khaleda Zia has said the Awami League government's plan to form the sub-regional group with India is worse than the 25-year 'slavery treaty' the party had signed while in power in the post-independence period.

The ruling party has finalised everything to hand over the country to India through implementation of the plan for four-nation group, she said while addressing a group of Jatiya Party leaders and workers who joined BNP at her Minto Road official residence yesterday evening.

"From now on Delhi would be governing our country," the former prime minister said and

proposed the formation of an 'oikya parishad' (unity council) comprising representatives of different professional groups to resist the 'Indian aggression'.

"This is the best time for the people to have their patriotism tested," she said urging all those willing to salvage the country from Indian expansionism, "to rally round the BNP."

Blaming the ruling party for 'serving the interests of India and ignoring those of the people of the country,' Begum Zia said by doing so, this government cannot stay in power nor will it be allowed to cling to power.

Justifying her party's abstention from parliament session, the BNP chief said, "Only a few senior lawmakers of our party are allowed to speak fol-

lowing their persistent efforts while others are totally ignored. Besides, even the few words by our senior members are not telecast. But we see the TV broadcasting all those falsehoods resorted to by the Treasury Bench members."

In this regard, she demanded strict observance of parliament's rules of procedure, 'neutral role' of the Speaker and of the TV, on end to "repression" on her party workers and release of those detained.

Regretting the 'lack of government move' to resolve the impasse in parliament, the BNP chief said, "Even if these demands are met, we'll launch the planned agitation to protest the government's secret deal (with India)." See Page 12 Col 8

Bangabandhu Cup final today

Sports Reporter

The final of the Bangabandhu Cup-Silver Jubilee of Independence football tournament today coincides with the celebration of the home-coming of Bangabandhu from captivity in Pakistan.

PSM (Ujung Pandang) Football Club of Indonesia will take on Malaysia Red this afternoon at the Dhaka Stadium. The match will kick off at 3 pm. Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar will relay the

semi-finals. On Tuesday, Malaysia Red eliminated Abahani in a tie-breaker in the first semi-final while the Indonesians made their way to the final with a convincing 4-2 win over Mohammedans in the second semi-final on Wednesday.

Both teams were found yesterday confident about their victory in today's final. However, talking to The Daily Star, both coaches expressed



MOHAMMAD BASRI



IRFAN BAKHT

match live from the big bowl. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the eldest daughter of late Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, will witness the final as chief guest and hand over the trophy to the winners.

To mark the 25th year of the country's independence, Bangladesh Football Federation organised the Cup in which 12 teams from India, Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Russia, Thailand and hosts Bangladesh, split into four groups for the first round, participated in the 11-day meet. Four group winners, two local giants Mohammedan Sporting Club and Abahani Krira Chakra, and the two finalists qualified for

their guarded optimism. PSM coach Mohammad Basri (52), a former midfielder of the same team, said that his team has come to Bangladesh to win the tournament and nothing but the trophy will satisfy him.

"We are a semi professional side. We have a good set of players in the squad. If they can play according to their merits, they will win," said Basri who is on his fourth trip to Bangladesh.

Asked about today's opponents, the former Indonesian international who first came to Dhaka to play in the Aga Khan Gold Cup in 1961 as a 17-year old midfielder for the same

See Page 12 Col 6

Hearing of writ 'Aug 15 killers may have been court-martialled'

By SC Correspondent

The killers being in the army at the time of committing the offence in August 15, 1975 they might have been tried by court martial under the Army Act, submitted Attorney General Barrister K S Nabi in the High Court Division in hearing on the writ petitions filed challenging the Indemnity (Repeal) Act, 1996.

Referring to Article 61 and 62 of the Constitution in his concluding submission yesterday the Attorney General said, "The killers being army personnel murdered the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, President Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and hence they might have been tried by the court martial."

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VCs suggest President Advise political parties to de-link student fronts

Vice chancellors of different universities yesterday suggested President Justice Shahabuddin to call a meeting of all political parties to advise them to de-link the student organisations from their parties, reports UNB.

The suggestion was made by the VCs when they called on Shahabuddin Ahmed at Bangabababab yesterday.

They referred to the President's call to the leaders of society, including political parties, to refrain from using students for political purposes.

Vice-Chancellor of See Page 12 Col 3

Yasmin murder Depositions of 6 more witnesses recorded

From Our Correspondent

RANGPUR, Jan 9: The special court, set up for the trial of the Yasmin rape and murder case, recorded the depositions of six more witnesses today. Five witnesses gave their deposition yesterday.

Of the six witnesses, four were Adivasis. Two others were Zahidul Islam, a commissioner of Dinajpur Poursabha and Rezaul Haq, an advocate. The Adivasi witnesses — Khuku Moni, Bahamoni, Jewel Haziza and Habran — identified in the dock the three main accused in the case. They are: former ASI Moinul Huq, former constable Abdus Sattar and former police lines driver Amrita Lal Barman.

There are nine accused in the See Page 12 Col 2

200 houses gutted, one killed at Chittagong

CHITTAGONG, Jan 9: A devastating fire gutted more than 200 houses in the port city's Chowdhurypara area early today a youth killed and over 20 others injured, reports UNB.

Witnesses and Fire Brigade sources said, the nearly four-hour blaze destroyed kutcha houses, small shops, factories and shanties in three colonies — Sikder colony, Jafar colony and Jasim colony.

The fire is said to have originated from a tea stall at about 1:45 am, when most of the residents were asleep, and engulfed the area well before the news reached the firefighters.

Six vehicles of Fire Brigade along with policemen and local people doused the fire at 5:10 am after a long effort.

But a tragedy had already taken place as they recovered a body of an ill-fated teenager from inside a gutted house. The victim is Moinul, 15, son of Nitya Chandra Dey.

Sources also said, at least 20 people received injuries in the See Page 12 Col 2

Ershad released on bail 'All the cases were motivated'

By Staff Correspondent

Former president and Jatiya Party Chief Lt Gen (rtd) Hussain Muhammad Ershad was released on bail from the sub-jail, a converted villa near the Sangsad Bhaban, yesterday, six years and 25 days after he was deposed and taken into custody on a litany of corruption charges and a murder case.

He was granted ad-interim bail in the last of the 18 cases by the Full Bench of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court on Wednesday.



Ershad waves at supporters after release on bail yesterday. — Star photo

But it took more than 28 hours to complete the formalities for his release, which included furnishing a bail bond of Tk five lakh and unlocking a labyrinth of files to execute the court verdict, passed at 10:30 am Wednesday.

Hundreds of fidgety supporters, who gathered at the parliament precinct since early afternoon, expecting their leader's release with bouquet of roses and welcome banners, greeted him with thundering cheers as he emerged clutching a briefcase at 4:50 pm.

But he went back again, perhaps for the last time inside the Louis Kahn designed red-brick two-storied villa that had been his prison since he was brought there on July 14 last year on parole to attend parliament session as an MP.

He vowed to newsmen on that day never again to go back to the Dhaka Central Jail where he was interned since he was forced to resign, facing a massive upsurge against his nearly nine years of rule on December 6, 1990, and arrested six days later.

Dressed in a smartly tailored check blazer, the 69-year-old general waved back at his supporters, dancing and stumping in joy shouting slogans of welcome.

But he disappointed them as he was whisked away in an air-conditioned four wheeler chauffeured by his one time minister Shah Moazzem Hossain, ignoring calls by JP deputy secretary general Nazim Rahman Manju to address the supporters.

See Page 12 Col 7

PM at rally near Hardinge Bridge Every drop of water will be used in planned way

PABNA, Jan 9: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today said the government will utilise "every drop of Ganges water" in a planned way for the betterment of the people and to improve their economic condition, reports UNB.

"By utilising the water of the river Padma, we'll increase food production, create job for the people and ensure economic development," she said at a huge gathering at Pakshi near the Hardinge Bridge here in the afternoon.

The desertification process will be stopped with the flow of water... Green Bengal will be green again," Hasina said adding that the government would train the rivers for proper utilisation of water.

She said if we can build a barrage on the bank of the Padma, then the water will be used for irrigation, power generation, fish production and other economic activities.

The Prime Minister said her government has fulfilled her election pledge by realising our due share of the international river from which the country has been deprived for last 21 years.

In this context, she mentioned the signing of the historic 30-year Indo-Bangla Ganges water sharing treaty signed in New Delhi on December 12, 1966.

"We could solve the long-standing problem within a very short time for the good intention of our government. We succeeded as we wholeheartedly wanted a fruitful solution of the problem."

She said the previous government was not sincere to resolve the issue and they failed to realise the due share of the Ganges water. "Solution does not come through shouting, it comes through good intention and sincere efforts," she added.

See Page 12 Col 4



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing a big public meeting near the Hardinge Bridge at Pakshi yesterday. — PID photo

\$ 256m ADB loan for power, JMB, forestry projects

Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide loans of US \$256 million to co-finance three major projects in Bangladesh, reports UNB.

Three agreements to this effect were signed between Bangladesh and ADB in Manila yesterday, according to a faxed message received in the city. The projects are: the 9th Power Project, Jamuna Bridge Access Roads Project and Forestry Sector Project.

The ADB loan equivalent to over US \$134.4 million for the 9th power project accounts for about 43 per cent of the total project cost of US \$313.7 million.

This project is designed to enable supply of 500-650 MW of additional power to the Dhaka area, provide about 22,000 new connections, and improve supply quality to all consumers in the Dhaka area.

It envisages construction of 230 kv transmission lines and sub-stations associated with the country's first private sector

power project to be built at Meghnaghat with 300-450 MW capacity.

The transmission project will include a line from Comilla which will make available another 200 MW for Dhaka. In addition, it will provide for 280 km of 132 kv, 33 kv, 11 kv, and 0.4 kv distribution systems, and enhance distribution capacity of about 200 MVA in Dhaka.

The ADB loan of over US \$72 million for the Jamuna Bridge access roads project accounts for 37 per cent of the total project cost of US \$196.3 million.

In addition to the loan, the ADB will provide a technical assistance grant of US dollars 250,000 for the preparation of a future road project.

The Jamuna Bridge Access Roads Project aims to optimise the utilisation of the Jamuna Bridge by reconstruction of about 143 km of national road including stretches between the Jamuna Bridge and Daudkandi

via Dhaka and a 20 km section from Feni towards Chittagong.

The ADB loan equivalent to over US \$50 million for the forestry sector project accounts for over 54 per cent of the total project cost of US \$92 million.

The forestry sector project covers various forestation, conservation, and natural forest management activities in line with the forestry sector master plan of the Bangladesh government.

It provides for an opportunity to expand the people-oriented forestry development programmes in the country which include forestation on all available government land, and conservation and management of the remaining natural forests.

The three agreements were signed by Bangladesh Ambassador to the Philippines Rezaul Hossain and ADB President Mitsuo Sato. ADB's Alternative Executive Director Faizur Razaque was present.



Bangabandhu's home-coming day today

By Staff Correspondent

Today is the home-coming day of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

On this day in 1972, Bangabandhu returned home after more than nine months of captivity in Pakistan during the country's War of Liberation.

The ruling Awami League, its front organisations and differ-

Article on page 4

ent socio-cultural bodies have taken up various programmes in celebration of the 26th anniversary of the great leader's homecoming.

Pakistani occupation forces arrested and took away Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from his Dhamondia residence on the night of March 25, 1971 as they cracked down on the unarmed freedom-loving people of Bangladesh. After a nine-month bloody war, the occupation forces surrendered on December 16 the same year.

Bangabandhu returned to his long-cherished independent Bangladesh on January 10, 1972. Lakhs of jubilant people gave a rousing reception to the national hero showering him

See Page 12 Col 4

Nasim, 6 other army officers get retirement

Former Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Abu Saleh Mohammad Nasim BB, psc, and six other army officers have been awarded premature (compulsory) retirement from the service of Bangladesh Army, reports UNB.

According to a notification of the Defence Ministry issued yesterday, the retirement took effect from the date of their dismissal on June 14, 1996.

Other retired officers are Maj Gen Mohammad Anuddin, BP, psc; Maj Gen Gholam Hossain Khan, BP, psc; Brig K M Abu Bakr, BP, psc; Brig K M Fazlur Rahman, psc; Brig Md Zillur Rahman, psc and Brig Shafi Mohammad Mahboob, psc.

Young man shot dead in city

By Staff Correspondent

A young man was shot dead in the city's Bangshal area last night.

The victim was identified as Abdur Rahman, 20, son of Rahim Bakhsh. A resident of Abul Hasnat Road, Rahman was returning home at around 8 pm when an unidentified gang fired on him, police said.

He succumbed to his injuries on the way to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), hospital sources said.

Police suspected that the killing was a sequel to family feud.

The body was sent to the DMCH morgue for autopsy.

Mobile court starts functioning at ZIA

By Staff Correspondent

A mobile court has started functioning at Zia International Airport (ZIA) in a bid to check crimes and violence in the airport area.

The court will keep vigilance on different criminals activities such as harassing the passengers, trespassing of 'unwanted people' into the restricted areas, illegal trading of foreign currencies in and around the airport areas, disturbance of outsiders in the canopy areas, said airport sources.

A senior ZIA official said last night they have set up the mobile court to provide better service to the passengers.

The court with two magistrates and police will continue its activities under the supervision of the Director of ZIA.

Dacoity at Banani

By Staff Correspondent

Dacoits looted electronic goods worth about Tk 41,000 from a house at Banani under Gulshan thana in the city early yesterday.

The gang broke open the iron grill and entered the drawing room on the house on the ground floor on Road No 17 near Banani Bazar, family members and police said.

The dacoits decamped with a colour television and a video cassette player.

A case has been filed with Gulshan thana in this regard. None was arrested till last night, police said.