

## 2 killed, 12 missing as trawler capsizes

PIROUPEP, Feb 12: Two people were killed and 12 reported missing after a trawler capsized in the Kocha river near Kaokhali launched terminal here today, reports UNB.

According to police and local people, the trawler with 50 passengers aboard overturned when it was hit by a Dhaka-bound launch MV Tarika-3 at around 11 in the morning. The trawler was going to Jhalakathi.

The dead were identified as Lili Aktar, 14, daughter of Abdur Razzak of Jhalakathi and Tina Kazi, 2, daughter of Panna Kazi of Swarupkathi.

Police and local people rescued 30 injured passengers. A few passengers swam ashore.

The trawler was salvaged this afternoon. Local people said some 12 passengers are still missing.

## Opposition's agitation plan won't succeed: PM



Hasina at press conference. — Star photo

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said she does not see any prospect for the Opposition to destabilise the political situation through anti-government agitation in the near future.

"I don't think they can create such an atmosphere because the people, who have shed much blood for democracy, are now very conscious and they won't tolerate playing with their franchise," she told a press conference at the Ganabhaban, her official residence, yesterday afternoon.

The main opposition BNP said earlier that it would launch a tough anti-government agitation programme 15 days after the Eid-ul-Fitr if its demands including an end to alleged repression on the Opposition activists were not fulfilled.

Replying to a question, the Prime Minister further said, "At best the opposition party can damage vehicles in the name of agitation. But no agitation can succeed without the participation of the people who now want peace and stability which is a must for foreign investment."

Sheikh Hasina, however, hastened to add, "The rulers in the past 21 years had placed their people at different positions (in the administration) who are now trying by different means to thwart our endeavours and initiatives. I would like to leave to the people to decide if they (the Opposition) have any right to stop our march towards progress and prosperity."

The press conference was arranged to brief the newsmen on the outcome of her visit to the

## Clinton to visit Bangladesh

President of the United States Bill Clinton has expressed his willingness to visit Bangladesh at a convenient time, reports UNB.

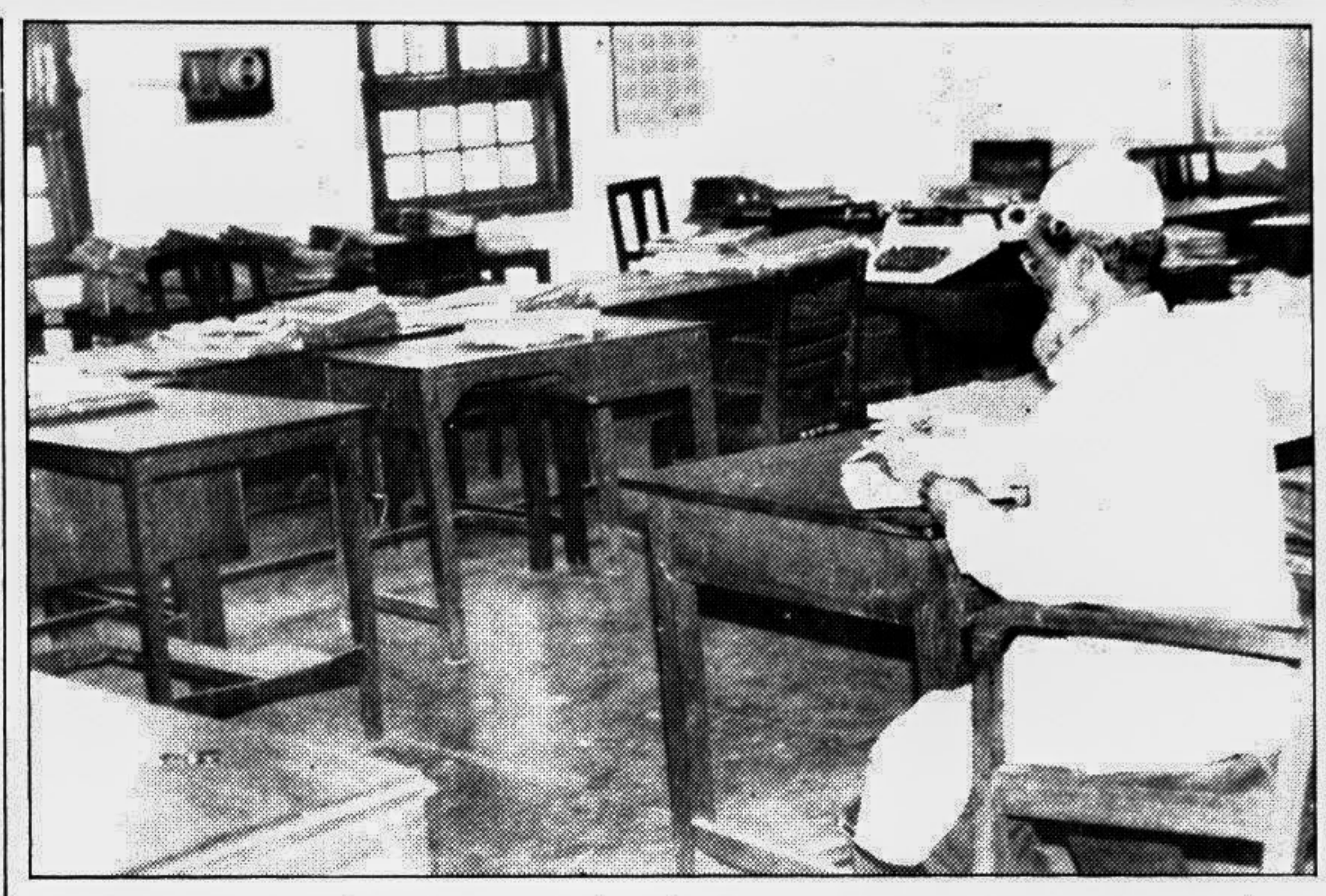
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, briefing the press about her recent visit to Washington to attend the 3-day Microcredit Summit, said during her exclusive talks with Clinton she had invited both the US President and the First Lady to visit Bangladesh.

"Accepting my invitation they (President and Hillary Clinton) have expressed their willingness to come to Bangladesh during Clinton's presidency tenure," Hasina said in her written statement.

The Prime Minister said on February 3 she went to the White House at the invitation of the US President and the First Lady.

"For twenty minutes I discussed bilateral issues with President Clinton at the Oval Office," Hasina told newsmen.

Clinton's visit to Bangladesh is part of a series of visits to the Third World, converting



An office room in the Secretariat yesterday, the first working day after the Eid vacation. — Star photo

## Farmers agitate for fertiliser

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Feb 12: Hundreds of farmers barricaded the Jhenidah-Jessore highway at Prishoykhali bazar for one and a half hours today demanding fertiliser.

Witnesses said, the agitating farmers put up barricade on the road at about 10 am and later withdrew it after the Deputy Commissioner's assurance of adequate supply of fertiliser.

When contacted in Dhaka over phone, Food and Agriculture Minister Begum Motia Chowdhury told The Daily Star later in the night that after receiving the news of road barricade she asked the DC to assure the farmers on her behalf that adequate fertiliser would be made available.

Motia Chowdhury further added that due to Eid vacation the buffer stock of fertiliser at Kaliganj could not be replenished. Following her directive, the BCIC today sent 720 tons of fertiliser to Kaliganj of which 312 tons have already been channelled to Jhenidah, she said.

## 22 killed, 55 injured in road accidents

By Staff Correspondent

Twenty-two people were killed and 55 others injured in road accidents in Narayanganj, Comilla, Dhaka, Chittagong, Lalmonirhat, Panchagarh, Kishoreganj and Habiganj during the last one week.

Our Narayanganj Correspondent reports: Six persons died in six road accidents in and around the town during the last four days, according to police.

An unidentified boy was crushed under the wheels of a bus on the Dhaka-Narayanganj Link road at Rambarbagh under Fatullah thana on Tuesday.

Earlier, at 8:15 pm on Sunday, one Nazmul Huq, 20, was run over by a speeding bus on the Dhaka Sylhet highway at Koranganj under Ruppaganj thana.

In another accident the next day, Bithi, 16 and Chhabli, 35, died when two buses collided head on at Noabari under

Sonarganga thana.

Babul Molla, 35, an autorickshaw passenger died when his vehicle was hit by a minibus coming from the opposite direction. The accident took place at Pagla under Fatullah thana at around 3:30 pm on Tuesday.

Bakul, 18, a bus conductor died after falling from a running bus at Shonarpara under Shiddirganj thana at 6:30 pm yesterday.

According to UNB, five people were killed and 12 injured in three accidents in Comilla district on Saturday, Sunday and Wednesday.

Police said a passenger bus skidded off the road at Jagurjhuli, about five kilometres from the Comilla town, yesterday leaving two people dead and 12 wounded.

One of the dead was identified. — See Page 12 Col 1

## Boy murder Housemaid arrested from Trishal

Mohammadpur police arrested Shahina alias Shaheda 25, who allegedly chopped to death a minor boy in the city last week, from Narayanpur village under Trishal thana in Mymensingh district last Saturday, reports BSS.

Safayet 7, son of Sharif Harunur Rashid, a teacher of Residential Model School and College was chopped to death and his mother injured seriously at the colleges staff quarter on February 5.

A team of police arrested Shaheda from her sister's house in Trishal, Mohammadpur police said. She was produced before the court of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM), Dhaka on Sunday where she gave her confessional statement.

In her confessional statement Shaheda told the court

## First day after Eid holidays Traffic thin, attendance in offices poor

By Staff Correspondent

Holy Eid-ul-Fitr, the greatest religious festival of the Muslims, was celebrated throughout the country on Sunday last with due fervour and gaiety.

After one month's fasting, the Muslims celebrated the Eid festival and joined congregations where special prayers were offered seeking divine blessings for continued peace, progress and prosperity of the nation as well as further strengthening the Muslim Ummah.

The four-day Eid holiday from Saturday to Tuesday last was preceded by a weekly holiday and a public holiday on Thursday on the occasion of the holy Lailatul Qadr.

On the Eid-day, people attended congregations, exchanged greetings, visited relatives and friends and offered sweets.

The main Eid congregation was held at 8 am at the National

## Health minister visits hospitals, expresses dissatisfaction

By Staff Correspondent

Minister for Health Salahuddin Yousuf, during his recent visits to some city hospitals, expressed his dissatisfaction over the management of the hospitals.

Salahuddin Yousuf, during his February 9-11 surprise visits, went to a total of seven hospitals which included the Orthopaedic Hospital at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, PG Hospital, Cardiac Hospital at Mohakhali, Leprosy Hospital, Cancer Hospital, Government Employees Hospital at Fulbaria, and the Maternity Care Hospital at Azimpur, sources concerned said.

The minister expressed his dissatisfaction over the hospital management following his visits as the attendance of doctors and the supporting staff was generally found to be very low and the light was also found to be insufficient in some of these hospitals.

## Tripura militants gun down 17

NEW DELHI, Feb 12: Tribal militants stormed a village in the northeastern Indian state of Tripura overnight and shot and killed 17 people, a news agency reported Wednesday, reports AP.

United News of India said the attackers first set fire to the homes of Bengali-speaking villagers and shot the residents as they fled the flames. Twenty other people were injured.

Police and soldiers were searching for suspects Wednesday morning, the agency said.

## Asim Dasgupta refutes Congress' charge New treaty guarantees steady water flow for Calcutta Port

CALCUTTA, Feb 12: The Calcutta Port received 1.20 lakh cusec water from Farakka in January in true spirit of the Indo-Bangladesh Ganges Water Sharing Treaty and the West Bengal government would expect steady flow of 40,000 cusec this month for the port, the State Finance Minister, Dr Asim Dasgupta, told the legislative assembly, reports PTI.

Refuting opposition Congress' charge that the treaty had been concluded at the cost of Calcutta Port, Dr Dasgupta cited a Central Water Commission report in the House to support the government's contention that the port received the required 40,000 cusec water thrice in the 10-day cycle last month from Farakka.

Dr Dasgupta was replying to a private resolution demanding that the Centre ensure adequate steps for steady water for the Calcutta Port during lean

season in the implementation of the 30-year water sharing pact.

The resolution, moved by CLP leader, Atish Sinha, and five Congress members, was later carried. The resolution also urged Centre for immediate implementation of the Rs 7,793 crore Sankosh River Project in the interest of the port, as also to ensure steps to maintain navigability of the port throughout the year.

In his reply the Finance Minister strongly defended the present Indo-Bangladesh Water Sharing Treaty and said provision of guarantee clause and drafting of the accord on formula basis would provide adequate safeguard to the Calcutta Port.

He said while in the 1977 treaty, there was a provision of the Port receiving 40,000 cusec from Farakka only once in a given 10-day cycle in a year the

## 2 foreign students of IIT assaulted

By Staff Correspondent

Two foreign students of the Islamic Institute of Technology at Joydevpur were assaulted by a gang of at least 10 persons near the campus on Tuesday night.

Joydevpur police, when contacted, said the Registrar of the Institute had lodged a case yesterday. More policemen have been deployed around the institution.

Police sources, quoting the FIR, said, Usman Niang and Abdullah Dieng were attacked by some 10 persons near the main gate of the institution at around 8:30 pm on Tuesday.

It was alleged in the FIR that the owner of a stationery shop and his men attacked the students.

The cause of the attack, however, was not known. Police arrested the shopkeeper.

The victims were sent to the Holy Family Hospital.

Meanwhile, some students, mainly from African nations, submitted memorandums to the Prime Minister, the Home Minister and embassies of the OIC countries.

## Nawaz Sharif takes oath on Feb 17

ISLAMABAD, Feb 12: Pakistani President Farooq Leghari said here Tuesday the transfer of power from the caretaker administration to the new government would be completed on February 17, report agencies.

The new prime minister would take oath of his office in the evening on the same day, Leghari said at a press conference at the Presidential House.

And the new provincial government would take the charge in all the four provinces by the end of the third week of February, he said.

Prime Minister-designate Nawaz Sharif said he will assume the premiership on February 17 following a vote of confidence in him by the new parliament.

Speaking to reporters in Karachi he said she was "happy" over the sweeping victory by Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (PML).

"If Sharif fulfils his commitments it would be good for the country," she said, adding that her party would not resort to agitation.

## Probe into death of rape victim begins

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Feb 12: Authorities today started a probe into the death of Shima Chowdhury who was under safe custody in Chittagong jail after being allegedly raped by police at the Raozan police station, official sources said.

Shima was taken to Chittagong Medical College Hospital on Friday night from Chittagong jail where the doctors declared her dead.

Shima, a garments factory employee, was taken to custody by Raozan thana police on October 9 after she allegedly eloped with one Abdul Hafiz. But Shima was allegedly gang-raped by four police personnel including a sub-inspector Uttam Kumar, at night at the Raozan police station.

The four police personnel were later arrested and sent to jail after a case was lodged against them.

**Inside Today**

**Article**

**Is a Two-party System Possible in Bangladesh?**

Column: Currents & Cross-Currents

by M M Rezaul Karim

## A lonely death at DMCH

By Morshed Ali Khan

"It's only 40 taka a seat to Dhaka," said the Bikalpa taxi driver waiting in front of the Mainamati cantonment. Within a few minutes, the taxi, a not-so-old Toyota Corolla, was on its way to Dhaka with myself on the front seat and another passenger, Mokhlesur Rahman on the back. The rush to get back to work will begin tomorrow," said the taxi driver. It was Tuesday evening, two days after the Eid-ul-Fitr.

The taxi ride came to me as a relief since I knew I would be holding my breath all the way to Dhaka on a bus being driven wrecklessly with its hydraulic horn blaring. Moreover, the taxi driver would drop me somewhere near my home within the next one hour or so.

God must have laughed at me! Within 40 minutes of the ride from Mainamati, near Gazaria village a group of policemen in heavy winter clothes and armed with 303 rifles waved our taxi to a halt. "We have just had a serious bus accident further down the road," said an officer with a walkie-talkie in his hand, "some 20 wounded people have been sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). I am afraid you have to transport the last wounded person on your car."

We were soon heading towards the Gazaria Thana Health Complex about quarter kilometers off the highway. Dr S M Mostafizur Rahman, the medical officer there, said that the only ambulance of the complex and of the thana area

was lying out of order for some time "because its parts got stolen."

The whole health complex looked rundown and dirty. On the first floor, about half a dozen patients were on their beds wrapped in filthy bed-sheets. Right in the corner, on the floor lay a blood-soaked wounded person, apparently a farmer in his mid-forties. His badly injured head wrapped in a gamcha (wash cloth), he was unconscious and groaning, his half-open eyes remained still. He was classified as 'unidentified' in the hospital register. The only treatment he had received since the accident two hours ago, was a saline whose needle now drew blood from the body filling the transparent pipe. But none cared. The hospital staff were now showing their impatience. "Come on take him into the car," one of them shouted, "you can take the blanket along but don't forget to bring it back."

A young man from the locality, Mannan, volunteered to accompany us to DMCH holding the man in his lap. Mokhlesur and I were crammed on the front seat. It was now about 10:30 pm.

At the emergency department of the DMCH, before taking the injured to the on-duty medical officer's room, three people were sitting in the small room with cigarettes in their hands. One of them looked up reluctantly and asked what I wanted.



The Hindu community observed the Saraswati Puja yesterday. — Star photo

## Akali Dal, BJP form govt in Punjab

NEW DELHI, Feb 12: An alliance between a Sikh religious party and Hindu nationalists formed a government in the northern Indian state of Punjab today, with Sikh leader Prakash Singh Badal as chief minister, reports AP.

A 10-member Cabinet was sworn-in by Governor B K N Chibber at a ceremony in a cricket stadium near the state capital, Chandigarh.

The Shiromani Akali Dal and the Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party won 93 seats in the 117-member state assembly. The Congress Party, which had controlled the state for last five years, won only 14.

Badal, head of the Shiromani Akali Dal, a party that once sympathised with separatists, becomes the chief minister of the state for the third time.

(Earlier story on page 8)

**Triangular cricket S Africa 42/1 in 14.3 overs**

Sports Reporter

South Africa were 42 for one after 14.3 overs when rain interrupted play during the final match of the three-nation limited-overs cricket tournament against India at Kingsmead in Durban, according to Star Sports monitored here late last night.

The South Africans were set to score a mere 192 runs in their allotted 50 overs to win the tourney, which also includes Zimbabwe. Earlier, after electing to bat the tourists were restricted to 191 for nine in their innings. (More on Page-11)

**CONDOLENCE**

We deeply mourn the sad demise of our director Mr. Khairul Kabir and convey our heartfelt sympathy and offer our condolence to his wife, sons and daughter and other members of the bereaved family.

His valuable contribution to the establishment and for the growth of this Company from the onset shall always be remembered. May Allah grant his soul eternal peace.

Board of Directors and the Management of

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