

Security around Ctg Port tightened

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Mar 22: The authorities have stepped up river-patrolling around the Chittagong port in addition to setting up a control room to operate round the clock in a bid to ensure safety and security of this major port, port officials said.

The security control room was set up and other safety measures were ordered by the minister concerned against the backdrop of a recent threat given by a guerrilla organisation of India to blow up Chittagong port if any joint military operation is launched along the India-Bangladesh border to drive out insurgent groups.

The threat to blow up Chittagong port was given by the North Eastern Liberation Tiger through a leaflet sent to the chairman of Chittagong port on March 6, the officials said.

The leaflet was signed by the commander in chief of NELT PK Barua, and it was posted from the General Post Office in Chittagong city.

It may be mentioned that the name of the chief of United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) is also PK Barua who denied his involvement with NELT.

See Page 12 Col 6

Repatriation to be completed by Apr 7 6700 tribal refugees return home in first batch March 28

KHAGRACHHARI, Mar 22: Some 6,700 tribal refugees will return home from camps in India in the first batch on March 28, officials announced here today, reports UNB.

The remaining 43,112 refugees will come back in phases up to April 7, they said giving detailed preparations for completing the Chakma refugee repatriation process expeditiously.

They said the National Committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs would receive the first batch of returnees who will come from Kathalhari camp in the India state of Tripura.

The decisions regarding repatriation were taken in Deputy Commissioner-level meeting of the two countries at Amapur in Tripura on March 19-20 in light of a package deal with the Refugee Welfare Association and the Dhaka talks between the National Committee on CHT and the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity.

According to the decision, tribal refugees will be back

through Ramgar thana ghat transit point on March 28, 29 and 30 while-through Tabolchhari transit on April 1 and 7.

Deputy Commissioner of Khagrachhari M Ismail told UNB that the National Committee would visit Khagrachhari on March 24 to see the preparations. They will also visit the two transit points.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Commissioner held a joint meeting of the TNOs of eight thanas of the district at this office today in preparation for conducting the repatriation smoothly.

BCL, Shibir clash at CU

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Mar 22: A tense situation is prevailing on the Chittagong University campus following a chase and counter chase between supporters of Chhatra League and Chhatra Shibir amid gunshots and blasts of crackers today.

See Page 12 Col 2

Spl OIC summit in Islamabad today

ISLAMABAD, Mar 22: Foreign Minister of 24 Islamic countries finalised the agenda of the special OIC summit scheduled for tomorrow with a pledge to tackle issues confronting the Muslim Ummah, reports UNB.

The one-day summit will take up the threats to peace in Afghanistan, Kashmir, Palestine and the Middle East.

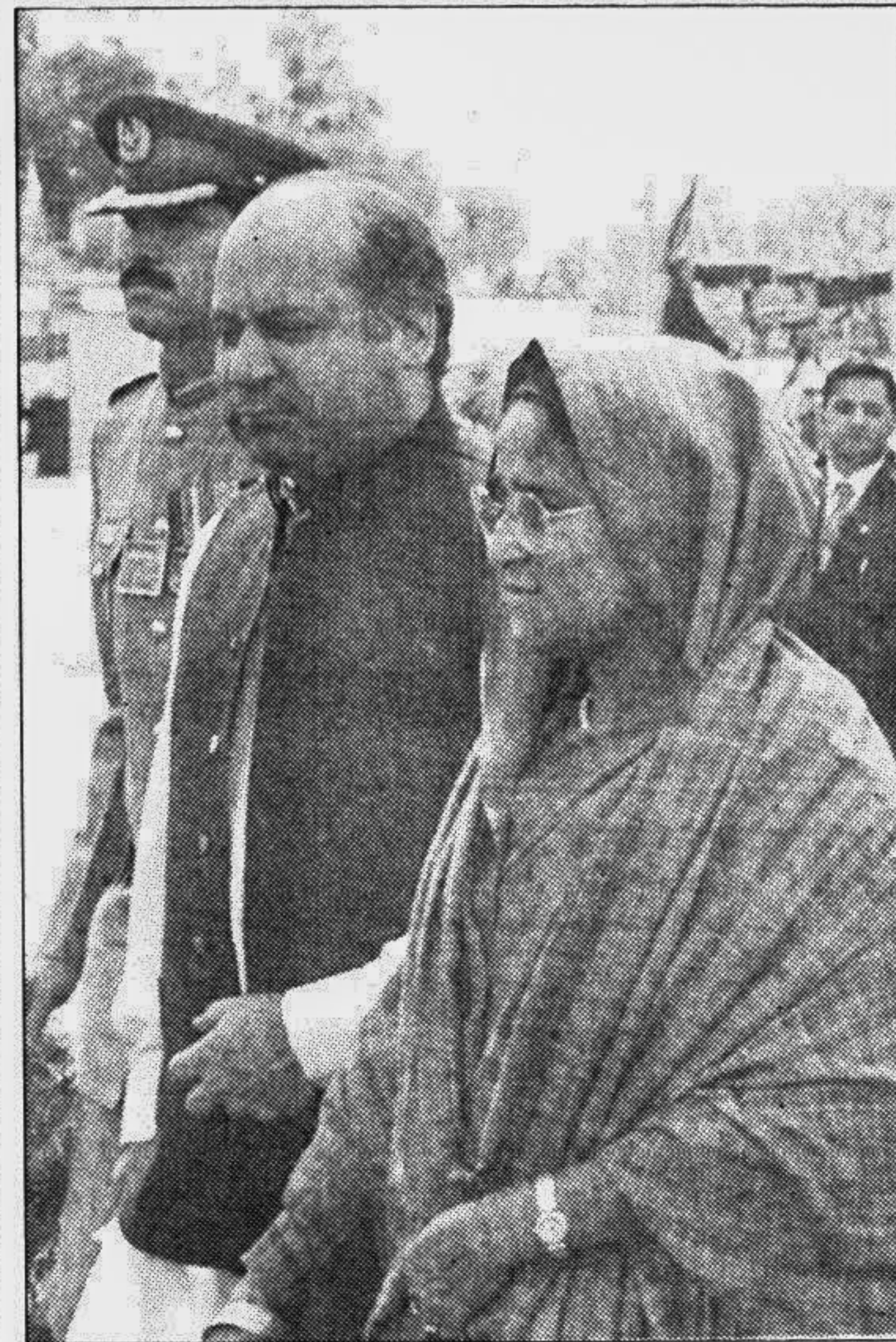
The summit will be attended by some 24 heads of government and state of Muslim countries. Pakistan expects some 1500 foreign guests to attend the grand assembly to be inaugurated by Pakistan President Farooq Ahmed Leghari.

The conference will have a one-point agenda. "Challenges of the 21st Century Confronting the Muslim World." A declaration based on the views expressed by the leaders may be issued at the conclusion of the first ever extraordinary session of the OIC.

Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, chairman of the summit, will lead the country's delegation.

There will be a working session in the afternoon during which heads of the delegations will give statements. The leaders may raise the issues confronting the Islamic Ummah.

The agenda of the summit is likely to focus on the crises in Sudan and Albania besides deliberations on the occasion about the obstacles to Arab-Israeli peace such as Jewish settlements in East Jerusalem. The OIC will also renew its support for Bosnia.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was received by her Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif on her arrival at Islamabad airport yesterday. — AFP/UNB photo

BNP calls 8-hr hartal today

By Staff Correspondent

The opposition BNP has called a countrywide hartal from 6 am to 2 pm today to protest, among other issues, giving corridor to India.

This will be the first such programme against the nine-month-old Awami League government.

BNP chief and Leader of the Opposition in Jatiya Sangsad Begum Khaleda Zia announced the hartal programme, preceded by three days of street demonstrations, at a city rally on Wednesday.

The programme, she said, is also to protest government attempts to jeopardise national sovereignty through the formation of a sub-regional forum and import of power from India, repression on opposition workers, deterioration of law and order, shortage of power, water and gas, absence of steps to check mosquito menace, share-market scandal and politicisation of the administration and the state-run electronic media.

A day after the hartal was called, police arrested four top-ranking leaders of the BNP from their city residences on

See Page 12 Col 7

Property worth Tk 1cr gutted at Victoria College

From Our Correspondent

COMILLA, Mar 22: The science laboratory of the Victoria University College here caught fire at around 7:00 pm today.

The fire was extinguished after more than three hours, damaged property worth Tk one crore, the principal of the college said.

Twenty fire fighters, with the help of hundreds of students, brought the blaze under control at around 10:00 pm, said Fire Service sources.

The cause of the fire was not immediately known. The principal, however, complained of the presence of anti-social elements around the college building.

Additional charge for Nasim

Post and Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim will hold the charge of Housing and Public Works Ministry as additional responsibilities, reports BSS.

The Prime Minister has taken the decision, a PID hand-out said in Dhaka yesterday.

Inside Today Article

Reforms for Facing the Twenty-first Century

Column: Insight by Kabir U Ahmad Page 4

Business

Tk 48m project for raising soil fertility underway

Week opens at DSE on bearish mood Pages 6,7

DSE MARKET

DSE price index	1240.04 (-2.65%)
Market capital Tk	9632.16cr
Transactions in volume	244656
Transaction in value Tk	6.16cr

CSE MARKET

CSE price index	569.55 (-2.13%)
Market capital Tk	7880.58cr
Transactions in volume	132905
Transaction in value Tk	19900265

International

US vetoes UN resolution criticising Israeli settlement plan in Jerusalem

Ruling party sweeps opposition in Lankan local govt polls Page 8

Supplement

One page supplement on Pakistan Day Page 9

Two young men shot dead at Motijheel

By Staff Correspondent

Two young men were shot dead by unidentified men in the office of private manpower recruiting agency in Motijheel Commercial Area in the city yesterday afternoon.

The dead were identified as Shishir, 27, and Amal, 28, police said. They were shot in the chest and head from point blank range at the office of the Metro Trade International in the third floor of a multi-storied building near the Shapla crossing at 5:30 pm. They died on the spot.

Shishir and Amal were residents of Maniknagar area under Demra thana, police said on the basis of preliminary information they received till last night.

The reason behind the killing could not be known immediately.

However, some sources quoting local people said that the incident occurred when three

young men including Shishir and Amal came to the office at about 5 pm to collect toll from the recruiting agency. Some hired terrorist of the locality were involved in the killing they said. The other person somehow managed to escape, they added.

Some others claimed that the two were gunned down when they reportedly came to collect some money they had given earlier to the recruiting agency for employment in Saudi Arabia. The recruiting agency told them that it would return the money as it failed to arrange jobs for them abroad, they claimed.

The three came under attack following an altercation with some employees of the recruiting agency, they added.

Witnesses said that the two blood soaked bodies were seen lying on the floor of the office for about two hours. None of

See Page 12 Col 6

Sixteen women's colleges being nationalised

By Staff Correspondent

Sixteen women's colleges at the district level will be nationalised under a scheme approved by the Executive Committee of the NEC recently, according to officials at the Education Ministry.

The officials said, a three-member committee will visit the colleges shortly.

The government had urged the authorities concerned of these colleges to vest their moveable and immovable properties with it and advised them not undertake any appointment or transfer of any official and personnel from November last year, the day to the effect of nationalisation was made.

The colleges include: Sheikh Fazilatunnesha Mohila College, Gopalganj; Panchagarh Mohila College; Golam Haider Khan Mohila College, Shariatpur; Gazipur Mohila College, Gazipur; Jhalokathi Mohila College, Jhalokathi; Adarsha Mo-

See Page 12 Col 3

'Fake major' held from Ershad's residence

A 'fake major' was arrested yesterday from the residence of the former president and Jatiya Party chief Hussain Mohammad Ershad, reports BSS.

Police said, the 'fake major' named Mohammad Moslem Miah aged about 30 to 35 was caught red handed by the personal assistant of HM Ershad at about 10:30 am when he was entering his (Ershad's) Gulshan house forcibly.

The 'fake major' was later handed over to Gulshan police.

A case was registered with Gulshan police station.

Australian DPM arrives Apr 7

By Staff Correspondent

Australian Deputy Prime Minister Tim Fisher will arrive in Dhaka on April 7 on a three-day official visit to Bangladesh, according to diplomatic sources.

The main purpose of Fisher's visit is to expand trade between Bangladesh and Australia. He will lead a big delegation including 17 businessmen. He will also visit some other South Asian countries.

Fisher will have talks with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the Foreign Minister. He will also meet some other ministers during his stay in Dhaka.

Barisal dist AL confce held

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Mar 22: The district council conference of Awami League was held at the Central Saheed Minar here today.

The conference being held after 5 years, was inaugurated by Abdul Jalil, joint secretary, AL central committee. The report was read out by Abul Hasnat Abdullah, Chief Whip and Barisal district committee secretary.

Presided over by Mahiuddin Ahmed, president district committee and a former MP the conference was addressed among others by A K Faizul Haq, State Minister for Jute.

Hasina, Rafsanjani for reactivating JEC

ISLAMABAD, Mar 22: Bangladesh and Iran today laid stress on reactivating the joint economic commission and other existing trade and economic programmes between them, reports BSS.

The two countries expressed their willingness to expand bilateral cooperation when Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called on Iranian President Ali Hashemi Rafsanjani at the Punjab House here this evening.

During the meeting, Rafsanjani showed keen interest in cooperation with Bangladesh in various economic and infrastructural projects. He particularly expressed willingness to cooperate with and assist Bangladesh in dredging rivers and related projects. "I shall send my minister concerned who is also the head of the Joint Economic Commission to study such projects," he said.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina apprised the Iranian President of various programmes and policies of her

government. She also referred to the signing of the Ganges water sharing treaty with India.

Referring to the friendly relations between the two countries, she said the people of Bangladesh and Iran share common culture, tradition and history. In this regard, she said that 8,000 Persian words have been accommodated in the Bengali language.

Later in the evening, former Prime Minister and Chairperson of Pakistan Peoples Party Benazir Bhutto called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the residence of Bangladesh High Commissioner in Islamabad.

They discussed matters relating to bilateral, regional and SAARC issues.

Another report says, Bangladesh and Malaysia today agreed to further strengthen economic and commercial activities between the two friendly countries.

The two countries also expressed their keenness to con-

See Page 12 Col 3

D-8 will be launched at Istanbul summit in June

By M Anwarul Haq

Eight member countries of the OIC having a combined population close to one billion are now actively working towards forming a new economic bloc that would forge closer ties for creating bigger markets for the common benefit of their peoples.

The countries involved in the launching of the new bloc initiated by Turkey, which would also function as a global development organisation, are Bangladesh, Pakistan, Egypt, Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia and Nigeria.

Turkish Ambassador to Bangladesh K Ozcan Davaz told The Daily Star yesterday that the new organisation, known as the Developing Eight or D-8, is due to be launched through a conference of foreign ministers followed by a summit of heads of government of the eight countries in the historic city of Istanbul between June 12 and 18.

The foreign ministers' meet is expected to draw up the charter of the D-8 which would be formally endorsed at the summit.

Sources concerned said that the D-8 would try to launch a shipping line and devise methods to sell agricultural products such as cotton and jute and other items among the members. The organisation would also try to work out methods for building backward linkages for ready-made garments in the context of the post Multi-Fibre Agreement (MFA), among other economic issues of common concern.

Turkish President Suleyman Demirel, during his three-day visit to Bangladesh beginning on March 25, is likely to have more discussions on the emerging bloc with top leaders, along with bilateral and regional issues, an authoritative

See Page 12 Col 4

5000 policemen to guard city's important installations

By Staff Correspondent

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) is planning to deploy some 5,000 policemen to ensure security of different important installations in the city during the eight-hour hartal today, according to police sources last night.

Police will guard almost all the control rooms of the utility services—water, electricity, gas, WASA and TKT.

Besides police, Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) personnel are also likely to be posted in Bangladesh Television, Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Secretariat.

Meanwhile, the Detective Branch (DB) and police from different thanas raided various part of the city early yesterday, said police adding most of the criminals were in hiding following the arrest of four BNP leader last Thursday.

Our operation to arrest the

See Page 12 Col 6

12 BNP workers arrested in city

By Staff Correspondent

At least 12 BNP supporters were arrested from different parts of the city yesterday.

Police said the BNP activists were arrested after they went on a rampage damaging vehicles and shops.

In a special drive yesterday, police also arrested 21 people for their alleged involvement in subversive activities.

In a raid on a mess at west Agargaon under Mohammodpur thana Friday night, the DB police arrested three others and recovered nine home-made bombs and raw materials used in making cocktails.

In a press statement last night, BNP claimed its workers were arrested from almost every

See Page 12 Col 8

JCD-BCL clash at Faridpur: 30 injured

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Mar 22: At least 30 persons, including four police officers, were injured in a clash between two rival student groups here this evening.

Five of the injured, belonging to BCL, were admitted to the Faridpur general hospital.

The clash started between the activists of the Bangladesh Chhatra League and the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal over the Polytechnic Institute students' union election.

The police officers injured in the clash include ASF Rezaul Karim, OC Abdur Razzaque and two assistant sub-inspectors. Police fired tear-gas shells to disperse the rival groups.

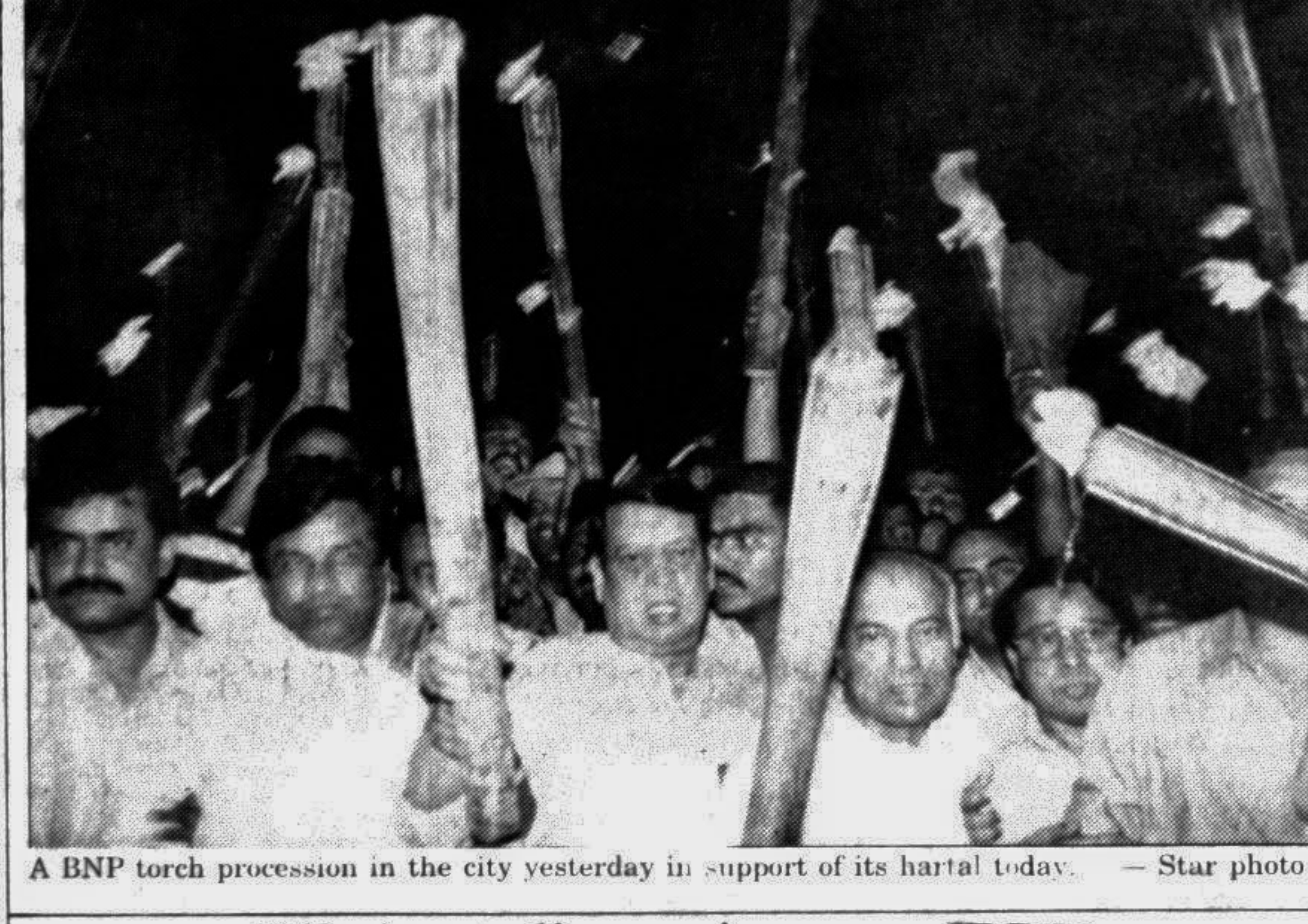
Acid thrown at two FH Hall canteen boys

By Staff Correspondent

Two teenage boys sustained burn injuries when a canteen employee of the Fazul Haq Hall of Dhaka University threw acid at them Friday night.

The victims, identified as Shah Jalal, 13, and Nobi Hosain, 17, also employees of the canteen, were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), hospital sources

See Page 12 Col 8



A BNP torch procession in the city yesterday in support of its hartal today. — Star photo

Kibria at discussion on IRBD Govt looking for ways to expand tax base before next budget

By Staff Correspondent

A panel of top economists, researchers and donor representatives yesterday observed that the government should take steps to raise the tax-GDP ratio through expanding the net of VAT and direct tax to maintain budgetary balance.

They also felt the public expenditure programme should be put under rigorous examination for cutting unnecessary expenditure.

The suggestions came at a dialogue organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) at the CIRDP auditorium on the occasion of publication of its Independent Review of Bangladesh's Development (IRBD), 1996. It was chaired by Prof Rehman Sobhan.

Finance Minister SAMS Kibria, speaking as chief guest, said the government is carefully looking for ways for expanding the tax base ahead of the next budget. "There are too

many exemptions in the present tax system," he said.

There are 1200 items which are exempted from import duty. I find little justification to exempt these items from duty. I urge the chamber leaders to see the reality that the government needs money to improve its services."

The Finance Minister said the falling trend in foreign exchange reserve was checked after Awami League came to power.

He blamed "an abnormal expansion" in domestic credit in 1995, by about 24 per cent, for the fall in foreign exchange reserve. "This credit was given to create an illusion of economic recovery," he said.

Kibria said a little bit of inflation is not bad in a growing economy but added, "an inflation rate of above five per cent at this moment would be too much."

Kibria said the amount of bad debt is on the rise now because of the huge loans given on political ground during the BNP rule.

He said such "politically motivated" loans have now been stopped.

The legal system is not effective enough to tackle the loan defaulters. Legal reform must be completed so that people can be punished for defaulting, he said.

Talking about the financial sector reform programme, he said it has only touched the peripheral issues leaving vital ones like proper accounting system, training and management untouched.

Former adviser to the caretaker government Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud said the macro-economic situation took a sharp upturn in 1993-94 which became an abortive at

See Page 12 Col 4

South African envoy tells The Daily Star Mandela coming to thank people of Bangladesh

By Nurul Kabir

South African President Nelson Mandela will visit Bangladesh to thank the people of the country for its consistent support to the decades-long struggle of the people of his country for democracy, Jerry M Matsila, the first non-president South African High Commissioner to Bangladesh has said.

Mandela is due in Dhaka tomorrow on a three day visit. The South African leader is coming on the invitation of Bangladesh government to attend state functions on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of Independence.

"For Mandela, in other words, for us, it is an obligation to say thanks to the people of Bangladesh for what they have done for the people of South Africa in their struggle against apartheid," Matsila, said in an interview with The Daily Star.



Jerry M Matsila

Matsila, based in New Delhi came to Dhaka on March 20 to present his credentials to President Shahabuddin Ahmed. He left Dhaka for New Delhi the same day.

"It was impossible for Mandela to refuse the invitation, specially when Bangladesh had always stood by the struggle of the South African people at various international fora," Matsila said. "It is rather an honour for us that Mandela will get the scope for paying tribute to those who had fought for the independence of Bangladesh. Both the nations — Bangladesh and South African — have undergone similar misfortune."

Asked what are the issues that are likely to come up for discussion at the meeting between President Mandela and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Matsila said: "Since we share similar aspirations and anxieties as developing nations, a large number of issues ranging from bilateral and regional co-

See Page 12 Col 1