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The Daily Star

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Detention of BNP leaders: Showcase on govt

By SC Correspondent
 The High Court yesterday directed the government to show cause by Sunday as to why the detentions of Dr Khandker Mosharraf Hossain, MP and joint Secretary General of BNP, Abdul Mannan, MP, Mirza Abbas, Jubo Dal President and Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, Jubo Dal General Secretary, should not be declared illegal and without lawful authority.

The division bench of the HC comprising Justice MM Haque and Justice Md Hasan Amin also fixed next Monday for hearing of the rules.

The detenus were arrested from their respective city residences in the early hours on Thursday and were given 30 days detention under the Special Powers Act, 1974.

Wives of the detenus separately filed the habeas corpus writs.

Barrister Maudud Ahmed assisted by Advocate Azizul Huq, Barrister Mahbuddin Khokon, Advocate Fakhrudin and Humayun Kabir Bulbul, appeared for the petitioners.

Track 'uprooted' 1 killed in train accident near Chittagong

From Staff Correspondent
 CHITTAGONG, Mar 23: At least one passenger was killed and four others injured in a train accident early today on Chittagong-Dohazari line at Hashimpur, 25 miles off the city, police and Railway sources said.

The dead person could not be identified. The injured were admitted to a local hospital.

The passenger train from Dohazari bound for the port city met with the accident at around 5 am while its engine and two bogies skidded off the track.

Police said about 100 yards of the track were uprooted that caused the accident. Police officers were seen inspecting the site.

See Page 12 Col 7

One dies in fire at Natore jute godown

From Our Correspondent
 NATORE, Mar 23: One person died of suffocation when he tried to put out a fire at a jute godown today.

Shah Alam, 22, a college student, attempted to put out the fire at the jute godown at Chalk Baidyanath near the town. The godown was set on fire allegedly by a group of people during hartal hours.

Alam died due to suffocation while two more injured persons were admitted to the Sadar Hospital, hospital sources said.

Local Awami League leaders blamed the BNP activists for setting the godown on fire and claimed Alam to be an activist of its student wing.

Denying the involvement of the BNP in the fire incident, the local BNP MP claimed the Shah Alam had died in an accident and their political opponents were using it to discredit the BNP.

Newspaper transports attacked during hartal

By Staff Correspondent
 The pro-hartal activists attacked several newspaper transports in different parts of the city yesterday injuring some journalists and newspaper employees.

Newspaper transports were exempted from the purview of the eight-hour hartal, called by the BNP.

See Page 12 Col 1

Inside Today
International
 Arafat urges Islamic leaders to rescue Jerusalem from Israel
 Junta sounds warning in the wake of racial unrest in Myanmar Page 8
Business
 Dhaka seeks continued US support for development
 Capital flow to developing states hits record high Pages 6,7

Exclusive interview with The Daily Star Better ties with Bangladesh a priority for Turkey: President Demirel

By Mahfuz Anam
 Developing relations with the fraternal country of Bangladesh is a high priority for Turkey, said Suleyman Demirel, President of Turkey who arrives in Dhaka tomorrow for a three day official visit.

The current trade volume of 25-30 million US dollars is far too little. We must overcome all obstacles to increase our trade volume. In this respect we must seriously consider establishing direct air link immediately, an agreement for which is expected to be signed shortly. We must also activate Maritime Agreement signed between us.

Speaking to The Daily Star in an exclusive interview in his Presidential Palace in the Turkish capital, Ankara, President Demirel underscored the fraternal and historic ties that exist between Bangladesh and Turkey and extended Turkey's all out support for Bangladesh's struggle for economic advancement and building a 'Sonar Bangla'. He expressed optimism about joint ventures and asked businessmen of both countries to explore possibilities of investment.

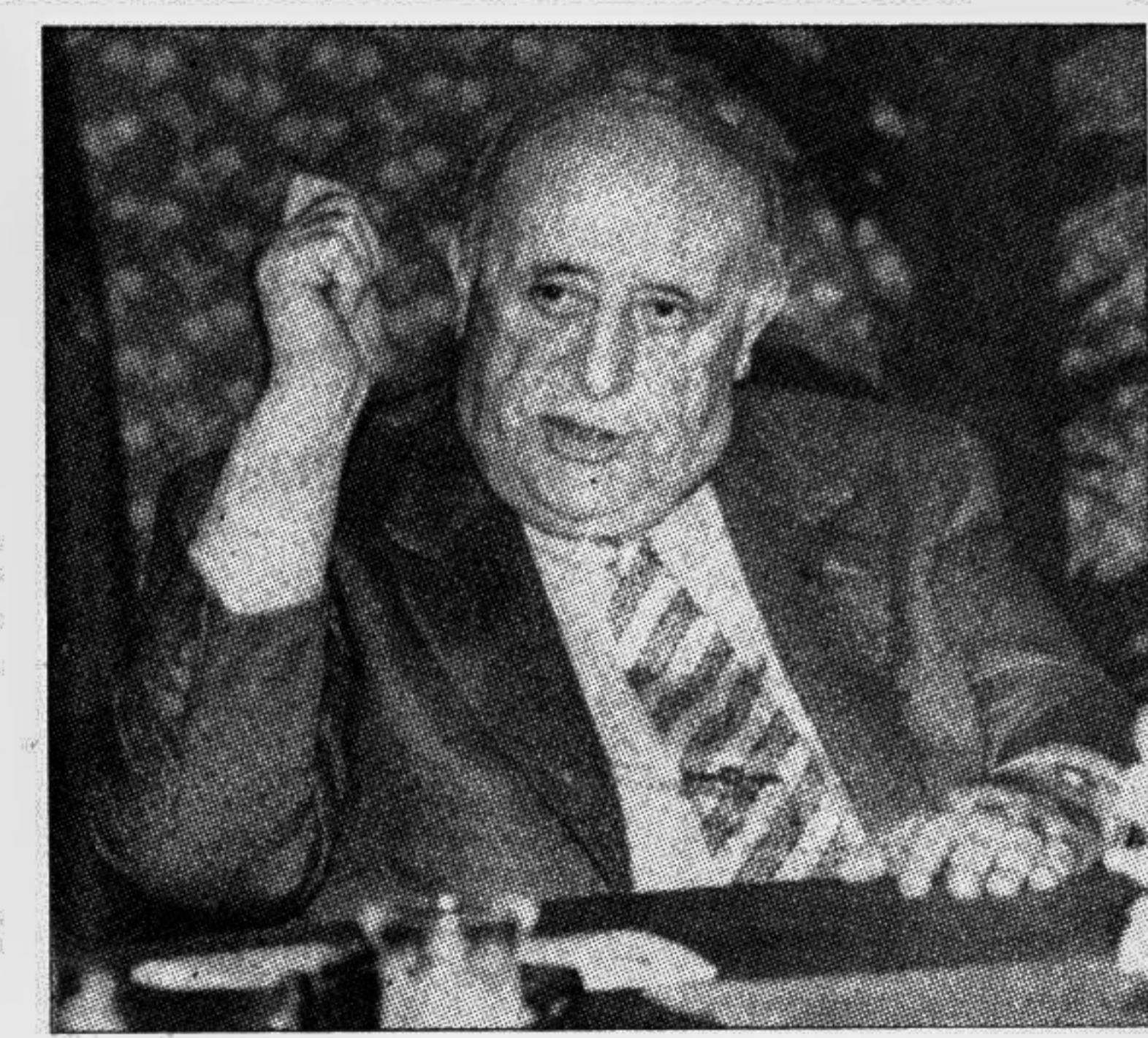
He stressed on cooperation between small and medium size enterprises of the two countries, noting that Turkey's small enterprises are the backbone of the economy. Turkey and Bangladesh can find many such enterprises which can join their efforts to fight their way into the developed markets.

President Demirel appeared to be fully aware of the economic and development challenges that Bangladesh was facing and said Turkey will always stand on the side of Bangladesh in her endeavours to create a better and more prosperous society for her people.

He underlined the need for increased contacts between the business community of the two countries, especially of the small and medium sizes, and invited Bangladeshi entrepreneurs to visit Turkey more, and vice versa. He said that there are 50,000 small and medium size Turkish enterprises in the European Union with about 37,000 in Germany alone. A linkage between this vibrant sector of the Turkish economy with that of Bangladesh will be of great mutual benefit, he said.

Full text on pages 4 & 5

See page 4



President Suleyman Demirel of Turkey

100 hurt in clashes during hartal, 250 arrested

By Staff Correspondent
 At least 100 people including former home minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury and three policemen were injured as pickets clashed with police and anti-hartal activists in the city and at some other places during the 8-hour countrywide hartal yesterday, called by the BNP.

Life was paralysed across the country with motorised transport keeping off the roads, business centres shuttered and educational institutions remaining closed during the hartal hours. Movement of trains was partially disrupted. Mongla Port remained inoperative while cargo handling was partial in Chittagong Port with no movement of goods to and from there.

About 250 people were arrested, 151 from different parts of the city, on charge of damaging vehicles, blasting bombs and disrupting normal life during the hartal period, police said.

In the city, about 50 people were injured in clashes in Mirpur, New Market, Topkhana Road, Shaahampur, Lalbagh and Gulistan areas, witnesses and hospital sources said. Of the injured persons, 15 were taken to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), hospital sources said.

According to our correspondents and police sources, 20 people were injured in Rajshahi, eight in Chittagong, two in Natore and 20 in Khulna and Jessore. Police sources in Khulna, when contacted, said 20 people were injured in Khulna and Jessore but did not give the break-up.

The opposition BNP called the hartal to protest what it called the government's giving transit facility to India and planned import of power from that country, move to form a sub-regional grouping and the crisis of power across the country and water crisis in the city.

Former home minister and a BNP leader Abdul Matin Chowdhury was injured in the head near the Bangabandhu Avenue as a pro-hartal procession, led by him, reportedly came under attack at around 10 am. He was rushed to the DMCH.

Talking to The Daily Star from the Coronary Care Unit (CCU) of the hospital, he alleged that a group of people with bamboo sticks and knives attacked the procession.

Chowdhury also alleged that the attackers came from central office of the ruling Awami League.

Repressive policy to hasten AL's fall: Khaleda

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia has said the government has resorted to repression as it was afraid of what she said, the people's spontaneous support to yesterday's hartal, reports UNB.

"This repressive policy will hasten their fall," she said briefly addressing a spontaneous gathering in front of BNP central office last night. Begum Zia said that after a

See Page 12 Col 7



BNP activists helping their leader former home minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury who was injured while leading a procession in the city during hartal hours yesterday. — Star photo

People observed hartal spontaneously: BNP

By Staff Correspondent
 BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, MP, yesterday claimed that over 100 party workers and leaders including former home minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury were injured in attacks by the "pro-government terrorists and the police" during the hartal in the city.

Police arrested more than 200 party workers from different parts of the city during the hartal, he alleged.

He was addressing a press conference at the Minto Road official residence of the Leader of the Opposition after the hartal.

The BNP will hold a public meeting in front of its Purana Paltoni central office in the city at 4 pm today to protest the attack on and arrest of party workers and leaders, he said.

Replying to a question, the BNP leader said that his party had no plan now to call a fresh hartal. The next course of action will depend on the government's performance, he added.

The hartal was observed spontaneously by the people despite government's pre-hartal "repressive measures," the BNP leader claimed. "This proved people's all out support to our demands and disapproval of the government's anti-people activities including giving transit to India."

"We hope the government will realise its misdeeds and refrain from imposing anything on the nation, doing anything unilaterally in future... We don't know where the country will be pushed to if the government continues its current practices," Mannan Bhuiyan said.

2 killed by 'BNP mastans' during hartal: AL

By Staff Correspondent
 Awami League joint secretary Md Abdul Jalil in a statement yesterday condemned what he said, the killings by BNP mastans during the hartal-hours and demanded immediate arrest of the killers.

Jalil said, one person was killed and several others were injured in a train accident in Chittagong as 'armed terrorists of BNP uprooted the railway tracks there and Md Fazlul

See Page 12 Col 8

7-pt action plan placed at Special Summit Dhaka's call to invest surplus resources within OIC states

ISLAMABAD, Mar 23: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called upon the OIC nations who have surplus resources to invest those within the Islamic world for meaningful cooperation among the member states, reports UNB.

Addressing the Extraordinary Summit of OIC here today, she said the Islamic countries could help each other with their enormous manpower resources, expertise and technical skill in all spheres.

"As we stand on the threshold of the 21st century, let us pledge ourselves to renew our efforts to give meaning and substance through concrete action to unity and solidarity of the Organisation of Islamic Conference," Hasina said in her deliberation in Bengali.

To that end, the Bangladesh Prime Minister placed the following seven-point plan of action for implementation:

- * Ensuring early implementation of the various resolutions and action plan for

See Page 12 Col 3

Hasina calls on Leghari

ISLAMABAD, Mar 23: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called on Pakistani President Farooq Ahmed Leghari at the international conference centre here this evening, reports BSS.

Sheikh Hasina, while talking about the signing of 30-year water sharing agreement with India, told Leghari that the agreement would help her country achieve economic prosperity.

The Prime Minister hoped that the countries in this region should live in peace and harmony for the benefits of the peoples.

Reciprocation her feeling Leghari said that countries of this sub-continent need peace to concentrate on economic development.

Leghari, while recalling his long stay in Bangladesh in various capacities as a civil servant, appreciated the progress made by Bangladesh.

Sheikh Hasina and Leghari also held an exclusive meeting for some time.

Ctg BNP factions hold separate rallies during hartal

From Staff Correspondent
 CHITTAGONG, Mar 23: Intra-party rivalry in Chittagong chapter of BNP surfaced again as rival factions organised separate rallies and programmes in support of hartal.

The rival factions were led by former minister Abdullah Al Noman, who is also the convener of the city committee of the party and Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, who was inducted into BNP from NDP, party sources said.

Despite BNP high command's instruction for holding a joint rally during the hartal period, the faction led by Salauddin Quader Chowdhury held the rally at Laldighi Maidan while the Noman-

See Page 12 Col 8

Tower collapses Phone services in coastal, off-shore areas snapped

A telecom tower at Chhillim-pur in Chittagong collapsed in a storm early today, snapping telephone services in coastal and off-shore areas, reports UNB.

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3 accords to be signed during Demirel's visit

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Three agreements are also likely to be signed between Dhaka and Ankara during Demirel's three-day visit to Bangladesh beginning tomorrow, sources concerned said.

The agreements are on cultural exchange for three years, civil aviation protocol for establishing air links and the other on cooperation on environment and protection of nature.

The Turkish President will lead a 127-member delegation that would include two ministers and 30 businessmen.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Turkish Ambassador to Bangladesh Kemal Ozcan Davaz said that the current visit would help expand the existing economic and cultural ties between two countries which has a shared heritage.

He said that the scope and modalities of cooperation on commercial and economic fronts between the two countries will receive attention during the visit of the Turkish President.

The large entourage of Turkish businessmen accompanying the President would also look into the prospect for joint venture collaboration and increasing trading, the envoy said.

A date for holding the next meeting of Joint Economic Commission between Bangladesh and Turkey is also likely to be agreed at the official talks between Turkish President Suleyman Demirel and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The official talks would be held at the International Conference Centre late afternoon tomorrow.

The official talks are expected to be followed by a joint press conference by the visiting President and the Prime Minister.

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See Page 12 Col 4

Bangladesh take on Argentina today

The International Cricket Conference (ICC) associate members trophy, the biggest cricket festival, begins in Malaysia today, reports UNB.

Twenty-two teams, including Bangladesh, are taking part in the World Cup qualifying meet split into four groups.

Top three teams of the ICC trophy will earn the right to play in the next World Cup Cricket to be held in England in 1999.

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The day's other matches: Bermuda vs Italy, Malaysia vs Denmark, Holland vs East & Central Africa, USA vs Singapore, UAE vs West Africa, Ireland vs Gibraltar and favourite Kenya vs Israel.

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Bangladesh team, which hopes to earn a World Cup cricket berth, reached Malaysia on March 14 and played three warm-up matches there.

Bangladesh Betar is expected to broadcast running commentary of the Bangladesh matches from next Saturday.



ICC TROPHY

CHAOS AT JHENIDAH DIST AL CONFERENCE
From Our Correspondent
 JHENIDAH, Mar 23: The biennial council conference of the Jhenidah district Awami League was held here last night.

According to witnesses, some Awami League activists started agitating when Amir Hossain Anu, an AL presidium member told the meeting that the district committee would be announced after discussions with the central members. They demanded a free and fair election.

During the meeting some crackers were exploded and stones hurled at the Jhenidah Circuit House. Some angry activists also threw brick bats at the vehicle of Amir Hossain Anu, the witnesses added.

See Page 12 Col 3

Nor'wester lashes Barisal: 3 killed

From Staff Correspondent
 BARISAL, Mar 23: Three persons were killed and forty injured when a nor'wester lashed Barisal and some thamas of the district late last night.

The severe storm started at about 2:15 am with a speed of at least on hundred kilometres per hour. More than two hundred thatched houses were razed to the ground, several hundred trees uprooted and standing crops on hundreds of acres damaged during the storm.

The deceased were identified as Abdur Rab, 18, Selina Akhtar, 20, and Hatem Khan, 35. They died after being trapped under their collapsed houses at Kazirchar village under Mehendiganj thana.

One Ensar Bibi, 70, was admitted to the Mehendiganj Thana Health Complex in a critical condition.

The power supply snapped during the nor'wester, resumed today.

According to Meteorological Department, 32mm rainfall was recorded during the storm. No detail reports could immediately be received from the Agriculture Department or the district administration.

Bangabandhu murder Framing of charges may begin today

By Staff Correspondent
 Charge-framing in the Bangabandhu murder case is scheduled to begin today in the court of District and Sessions Judge, Dhaka, Kazi Golam Rasul.

Of the 24 chargesheeted accused in the case, six are facing trial, 14 have been absconding and the names of four were not sent up for trial as they were dead.

The six facing the trial are former military officers Syed Farooq Rahman, Shahriar Rashid, Khairul Karim, Md Amin Chowdhury and Justice Shah Alen Naim Mominur Rahman gave the verdict on the Criminal Revision for bail.

Zobaida Rashid, wife of Col (dismissed) Khandkar Abdur Rashid, was arrested on November 2, 1996 in a arms case and subsequently she was shown arrested in the Bangabandhu murder case.

Zobaida Rashid's bail stayed

By SC Correspondent
 The Appellate Division ordered stay of operation of the High Court judgement granting bail to Zobaida Rashid, only female accused in the Bangabandhu murder case.

Justice Latifur Rahman of the Appellate Division in his residence upon an application of the government yesterday evening passed the stay order and fixed the matter for hearing on March 31.

Yesterday afternoon the division bench of the H C comprising Justice Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury and Justice Shah Alen Naim Mominur Rahman gave the verdict on the Criminal Revision for bail.

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