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## Press Note

### No plan to complete SSC exams in 7 days

There is no plan to complete the forthcoming SSC examinations in seven days, said an official announcement dispelling confusion about it, reports UNB.

The date and time-table for the examinations are yet to be finalised, said the announcement through a government Press Note issued yesterday.

"Holding all examinations in seven days is not only impossible but also a figment of imagination far from reality. The government is not thinking to do so," the Press Note categorically said.

It, however, says the government thinks that it will be wise to cut short, as far as possible, the long and time-consuming examination schedule.

The Education Boards will soon announce the date and time-table for the SSC examinations, it said and assured that there was no decision to see Page 12 Col 3

### SSC students in city, Habiganj go on rampage

By Staff Correspondent

Police arrested five school students on charge of damaging a number of vehicles in the Shrutapur area in the city yesterday.

Police said a section of SSC students went on rampage—following a rumour that their examinations would be held in February instead of March—on Tipu Sultan and Narinda Roads at about 1:30 pm and damaged at least seven vehicles.

Police rushed to the spot and picked up five of them.

Meanwhile, the 45 students of different city schools, who were arrested from Ramna and Kotwali area in connection with the similar incident on the same issue on Monday, were produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court yesterday.

In Habiganj, nine SSC examinees, protesting the alleged move to hold the SSC examination in one week-schedule, were arrested for damaging cars of see Page 12 Col 3

### Gas well explosion

### Drilling of relief well begins

By Staff Correspondent

Occidental has finally begun drilling from Monday night a relief well to seal permanently the Magurchara gas well that exploded on June 14 last, according to official sources here yesterday.

A team of engineers and experts from Occidental Bangladesh Limited started drilling the relief well at a point 620 metres west of the original well which has now become a crater.

Meanwhile, Energy Minister Noor Uddin Khan at a meeting with Petrobangla Chairman M. Mosharraf Hossain yesterday instructed him to "closely" monitor the drilling work and take necessary steps so that Occidental can begin fresh exploration there as soon as possible. They discussed the overall see Page 12 Col 3

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## Dhaka preparing for 3-nation summit

### Gujral, Sharif may hold exclusive talks Nov 23

By Toufique Imrose Khalidi

Primarily designed to boost business though, the three-nation Dhaka summit will go deeper by offering India and Pakistan a chance to have a face-to-face meeting of their top political leaders when their armies are fighting at the frontiers.

Officials here are excited about the fact that the meeting will be taking place in Bangladesh.

Heavy artillery shelling has been the order of the day, the latest being the last week's cross-border firings along the Jammu border which killed scores of civilians. Against this backdrop, Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral and his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif will meet each other on November 23 when they arrive here for the one-day summit.

Foreign Secretary Mustafizur Rahman told The Daily

Star yesterday that the two prime ministers had given formal consent to the summit, aimed to bolster economic co-operation among the three nations.

"Peace and tranquillity are pre-requisites to any economic activity," Rahman said, hinting at the hidden agenda. The proposed programmes will offer the two prime ministers to have an exclusive meeting, may be with two or three top aides, he said.

The foreign secretary said Bangladesh was not trying to mediate in the dispute, but would definitely like to see "good-neighbourly relations" develop, for which, as one source put it, "a subtle attempt" would be made by Dhaka.

The foreign secretary, responding to queries, said the summit had nothing to do with SAARC or SAPTA. "This is

purely an initiative from our prime minister, and we got very encouraging response from both India and Pakistan."

"The summit will try to find ways to remove the bottlenecks in trade and investment," he said, outlining the formal agenda of the summit, which would give "chambers a very important role to play."

Another key question for the government and business leaders would be "how to face the rest of the world in terms of protecting our interests in areas we have advantage."

The officials are busy chalking out programmes for the high-profile event, which will also bring together top businessmen from the three countries and the trade and finance ministers as participants.

They plan a two-hour formal opening ceremony, with the see Page 12 Col 1

### Refixation of minimum pay at Tk 2500 demanded

By Staff Correspondent

Police prevented rival groups of employees from facing each other and staging protests inside the Secretariat yesterday against the just announced pay scales and benefits for government employees and officials.

Low paid employees in separate meetings and statements demanded refixation of the minimum pay at Tk 2500 to 3000 and enhancement of the Tk 100 tiffin allowance.

Riot police in full gear was deployed there earlier in apprehension of trouble as the rivals had decided to hold rallies to express their reaction on the new pay scales and benefits to be paid in phases.

The Bangladesh Sachibala Karmachari Samity, led by Zafar Ahmed held a meeting at the office of the Home Ministry Employees Welfare Association at the in-shed beside the ministry at 10 am reviewing the new pay scales and benefits.

They came out in a procession raising different slogan, expressing their anger against the pay scales which they said failed to meet their expectations.

See Page 12 Col 1

### PW-20 discloses during deposition Col Jamil was shot dead as he rushed to save Bangabandhu

Bullets were whizzing past the car of Col Jamil as he rushed to Bangabandhu's house keeping his troops on alert after hearing the news of attacks on President Sheikh Mujib, said Lance Naik (ret'd) Anuddin Mollah yesterday, reports UNB.

The 20th prosecution witness in Bangabandhu murder case told the court that Col Jamil was gunned down by a group of army personnel near the residence of Bangabandhu on August 15 morning when he was trying to tell or gesture something to them.

During the trial proceedings at the special gylash of Dhaka District and Sessions Judge Court, Anuddin, the driver of the car, said he had told Col Jamil, who was the chief security officer of the then President, to attack the attackers by

his Ganobhaban force.

Jamil's reply was: "This is not a warfield. Civilians will be affected if we go in attack now." At that time Jamil was near Sobhanbagh Mosque and his force were waiting on Dhanmondi road 27.

Earlier, the witness said, Col Jamil had asked his Ganobhaban force to march towards Bangabandhu's residence with arms and ammunition and he himself rushed to save the life of country's founding President.

Anuddin said he saw some army personnel marching to the parked car and shooting Col Jamil dead.

Anuddin, who was posted at Bangabhaban on August 17 as a driver, said at that time army dominated at Bangabhaban and "I saw many army officers residing inside the Bangabha-

ban."

Of them, the PW-20 mentioned the names of absconding Major Dalim, Major Pasha and Major Noor and arrested Major Farooq and Major Shahriyar who were on dock during the deposition.

The witness was also cross-examined by the state defence counsels for the fugitives and defence lawyers for the arrested accused.

Earlier, the cross-examination of PW-19 Dafadar (ret'd) Shahidur Rahman was completed at the court of Judge Kazi Golam Rasul.

The court will resume at 10 am today.

Beginning his deposition, Anuddin Mollah, who hails from Magura Sadar thana, told the court that he joined the then see Page 12 Col 4

## Monkey, deer on sale at Dhaka Zoo



Spotted deer at the Dhaka Zoo are on sale.

— Star photo

By Morshed Ali Khan and Masud Arif

The Dhaka Zoo authorities are selling off some of its animals to public due to their over population and lack of space in the zoo, official sources said.

The spotted and the barking deer and monkeys were now being sold to anyone interested in buying them. Price of a spotted deer has been fixed at Tk 24,000 while a barking deer or mayna horeen costs Tk 10,000. A monkey less than two years old costs Tk 500 and the one above two years of age is sold for Tk 300, zoo officials said. There are nearly two hundred deers in the zoo.

In the recent past, six spotted deer were sold. Two others will be delivered within the next few days. Curator of the zoo Mohammad Asfar Ali said one of the pre-conditions for the sale in that the prospective owner of the animal must have it as a pet and he must have proper space to keep it.

Besides, the tiger, lion and hippopotamus population in the zoo soared over the last two years creating problem for the see Page 12 Col 8

### Kibria on new national pay scale AL met pre-poll pledge despite heavy pressure on exchequer

Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria yesterday said the government has increased salaries for its employees to fulfill a pre-election pledge although it would create a heavy pressure on the national exchequer, reports UNB.

Explaining the new National Pay Scale at a press conference in the city, he said the increase would cost the exchequer Tk 854 crore this year while a total of Tk 1,900 crore would be needed to implement it fully in July 1999.

The finance minister said the pay increase is being implemented in phases considering the government's financial capacity, its impact on the inflation situation and to maintain the fiscal discipline.

"We're increasing the salaries within the financial discipline," he told newsmen. He said the welfare of both the employees and the country was considered before the pay hike at the current level.

He said the general rate of inflation was 3 per cent in August. But the point-to-point inflation rate is a little bit more. He expected that the inflation rate would be limited below 5 per cent at the end of the year despite the pay hike.

"We should not allow the rate

of inflation above 5 per cent. We have to be careful about that," Kibria said.

The minister identified three salient features of the pay increase which made a difference between the new pay scale and other pay structures given by the past governments for the officials and employees.

Firstly, the real increase in case of the lowest pay, including tiffin allowance, was 42 per cent above the inflation while

there were no real increase during the 3rd and 4th pay scales, he said.

In fact, Kibria added, if the lowest pay was fixed at Tk 1,126, the inflation could be compensated. But the lowest pay is Tk 575 more than that of the inflation level.

Secondly, 86.48 per cent of the original recommendations of the National Pay Commission has been implemented compared to 75 per cent during the 3rd and 4th Pay Commission reports.

And finally, he said, the ratio of the lowest and highest pays has been reduced to 1:9.37 from 1:11.11. "We have narrowed the disparity," he remarked.

Asked about the financial implication, the minister said an amount of Tk 854 crore would be needed to pay 60 per cent of the enhanced salaries only for the revenue side in the first year.

Together with the development projects, he said, the total increase will stand at Tk 938 crore in the first year.

From the second year, the government will need additional resources of Tk 1,300 crore to implement the rest of the enhanced pay. When the see Page 12 Col 7



SAMS Kibria

### Wall collapse at ICD construction site kills one

By Staff Correspondent

A construction worker was killed and eight others injured when a brick wall collapsed on them at the under construction Inland Container Depot (ICD) at Kamalapur railway station yesterday.

The dead was identified as Sikandar Hawladar, 30, a resident of Manda, police said, adding he died on the spot at about 4 pm.

The injured persons, most of whom are labourers at the ICD construction site, were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Meanwhile, a section of people from the nearby Mugdara locality damaged at least 10 vehicles on the Biswa Road beside the ICD to protest the death in the wall collapse incident.

The reason behind the collapse of the newly-built boundary wall of the depot could not see Page 12 Col 3

### Review Sec 54 of CrPC to stop its misuse: AI

By Staff Correspondent

Amnesty International, in its recent report, 'Bangladesh: Institutional Failures Protect Alleged Rapists', has suggested review of Section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure to prevent its misuse for the purpose of arbitrary detention.

The report mainly deals with the Shima Chowdhury case in which four policemen accused of raping the young woman in custody in October 1996, were acquitted by a trial court on July 14, 1997.

Shima Chowdhury, an 18-year old garment factory worker and her boy friend Abdul Haliz, were arrested by police on October 8, 1996. They were both taken to the nearby Moghdi police camp and kept there till October 9 afternoon.

Shima's transfer to safe custody was ordered by the court following a prayer by police.

The AI says there should be inquiry on what grounds the

judge ordered her transfer to safe custody, why the judge continued to refuse the lawyers, family members and friends of Shima permission to meet her during her critical stage after the rape and while she was in safe custody, the reason why Shima was held in the same jail where her rapists were kept and the judge's continued refusal, as reported to AI, to accept the prayer that she be transferred to a woman's home run by human rights organisations.

"If the inquiry proved that the judge had acted in connivance with the police the judge himself should be brought to justice," the AI said.

According to the AI report, "Even after the death of Shima Chowdhury, some judges in Bangladesh continue to accept police prayer for safe custody."

It also urged the government to ensure that no woman is sent see Page 12 Col 7

### Sporadic clashes mark BNP-called hartal at Bogra

BOGRA, Oct 7: A day-long hartal was observed here today amidst sporadic clashes between BNP and Awami League workers, reports UNB.

The dawn-to-dusk hartal was called by BNP to protest the killing of Anwar who was shot dead in its local office on Monday.

Both the groups claimed Anwar as their party worker and fought with each other to take the body from Bogra Mohammad Ali Hospital.

BNP claimed Anwar as its worker and blamed Awami League for the killing.

Awami League refuted the allegation and claimed Anwar as its worker. In a statement, Awami League alleged that BNP workers took Anwar to their office and shot him.

Both the groups exploded home-made bombs in front of Mohammad Ali Hospital this morning.

Witnesses said several cock-tails were also hurled at the car of Bogra police super near PTI school on his way to the hospital. However, none was injured. see Page 12 Col 7

### Charges against Ilias, Ratan false, say 41 BNP MPs

By Staff Correspondent

Forty-one BNP MPs in a joint statement yesterday accused the government of making false propaganda against the two BNP leaders, Ilias Ali and Quamruzzaman Ratan, arrested during the October 5 rail-road barricade, called by the party.

The opposition lawmakers strongly condemned the 'government propaganda aimed at lodging cases with false charges against the two BNP leaders.'

"Former MP Ilias Ali and BNP central committee member Quamruzzaman Ratan were arrested from a procession at Mohakhali in the city during the barricade. Awami League terrorists attacked the BNP procession there brandishing illegal arms..." But surprisingly, Ilias and Ratan were arrested and false charges of carrying illegal arms were brought against them to hide the acts of armed see Page 12 Col 2

### Jute & Textile workers call off road-rail barricade

By Staff Correspondent

The jute and textile workers have postponed their planned 48-hour road-rail barricade and industrial strike scheduled to begin today.

They had announced the programmes to press their various demands including implementation of 1991 minimum wages award in the private sector industries and stopping disinvestment.

The agitation programme has been rescheduled for November 10-11 following a request from the government. Shah Alam, joint-convenor of the Patkal Samik Karmachari Sangram Parishad, Bangladesh Suta-Bastrakal Samik Karmachari Federation and Bastra Samik League, said in a statement yesterday.

The decision to postpone the siege programme followed two days of meetings between the government and labour leaders.

Chaired by State Minister for Labour and Manpower Abdul Mannan, the meeting was also attended by State Minister for Jute and Textiles Faezul Huq. Faezul Huq requested the labour leaders to postpone the programme for a month.



Hindu devotees at the Dhakeshwari Mandir premises on the first day of Durga Puja yesterday. —Star photo

### Durga Puja begins

Durga Puja, the greatest religious festival of the Hindu community, began in the city and elsewhere in the country yesterday, reports BSS.

The 'Shashthi Puja mandaps' heralded the beginning of the five-day festival.

The Acting Mayor of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Abdul Gaffar last evening visited the Mahanagar Puja mandap at the Dhakeshwari premises and assured of all possible cooperation to perform the puja properly.

The mahasaptami puja will be held today from 8:58 am.

KB Roy Chowdhury, the founder-president of Mahanagar Sarbarjanin Puja Committee and Bangladesh Puja Uddjan Parishad, yesterday in a simple ceremony laid the foundation stone of the new dharmashala of the Dhakeshwari Jatiya Mandir here in the evening.

### Tk 2005 cr rural dev projects approved

The Executive Committee of National Economic Council yesterday approved nine projects at a total cost of about Tk 2005 crore to gear up economic activities in rural areas, reports UNB.

The approval was given at a meeting held at the NEC building with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Under the projects, Tk 330 crore will be spent for construction and reconstruction of rural roads, bridges and culverts.

Some 1230 kilometres of B-type roads, 540 km rural roads and 2000 metres of B-type bridge/culvert and 6730 metres of rural bridge/culvert will be constructed.

Also 50 hats and bazars will be developed and trees planted on the sides of 1000-kilometre roads under the projects.

The main objective is to accelerate agricultural and commercial activities in the rural areas by constructing roads and

bridge/culverts on priority basis.

For rural development, roads connecting the village growth centres will be constructed under another project aided by World Food Programme at a cost of Tk 179.73 crore.

Under the project, some 356 rural growth centres will be connected with the nearby national highway network and inter-thana growth centre-connecting roads will be developed.

The objective of the project is to create scope for sustainable economic development in the rural areas through economic activities in the selected village growth centres.

The project is also targeted to strengthening the rural economy by creating additional off-season working scope for the unskilled rural workers.

Prime Minister Hasina directed the authorities concerned see Page 12 Col 7