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UP chairman murdered in Natore

From Our Correspondent
NATORE, Oct 29: A union parishad chairman was killed by some unidentified assailants in the Sadar thana area while he was returning home last night after campaigning for the ensuing UP polls, police said today.

Zahid Hossain Mukul, 35, chairman of No. 5 Bipro Belghana union under the Sadar thana and a Juba Dal leader was stabbed at Panditgram on Natore-Naldanga road while he was returning home in a motorcycle.

He was taken to Natore Sadar Hospital and later shifted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital where he died, police said.

The killing sparked off tension forcing the authorities to See Page 12 Col 6

Speaker convenes govt, Opposition meet Nov 1

Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury convened a meeting of government and opposition leaders on November 1 to discuss the formation of parliamentary committees and other issues for smooth functioning of the ensuing session, reports UNB.

He invited them to a luncheon meeting yesterday afternoon on his return from Islamabad after attending the second conference of the Association of SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians.

The Speaker took this personal initiative so that lively and constructive discussion on important issues could take place in the Parliament.

The next session of Parliament commences on November 2.

A press release issued by the Speaker's office said he had taken similar initiative of exchanging views with government and opposition leaders in the past to make the parliament session effective and lively. "He had got positive response from all sides."

This time also Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury hoped that he would get cooperation and positive response from all and ensuing session would be "lively and meaningful."

The Speaker's bid to resolve a staggering standoff between

the two sides came after an effort by the party in power to woo the main opposition back to parliament fell flat as BNP gave a cold shoulder to the government's latest overture.

The BNP leadership turned down Awami League's initial offer made by Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim for discussion to remove the impasse.

They said congenial atmosphere for such talks was missing following aggressive attitude of police towards BNP rallies and processions in Dhaka city.

The BNP lawmakers staged a walkout on the first day of the See Page 12 Col 8

Degree (Pass) exams begin today

The Degree (Pass) Examinations '97 under the National University will begin throughout the country today, reports UNB.

A total of 2,16,905 candidates from 733 affiliated Degree Colleges will appear at the examination. Of them, 1,56,104 are male and 60,771 female, official sources said.

Of the total listed examinees, 1,90,440 are regular, 22,509 private and 3,946 certificate course candidates.

Group-wise candidates are: BA (Pass)-1,12,278, BSS (Pass)-53,308, B Com (Pass)-31,361, BSc (Pass)-15,982, B Music-30 and Certificate Course-3,946.

The examinations will be held at 545 centres, including 16 sub-centres.

Officials said the practical examinations will start immediately. See Page 12 Col 5

BRTA fails to limit number of tempos, autorickshaws

By Morshed Ali Khan

Autorickshaws and tempos, believed to be the leading agents contributing to the city's air and noise pollution levels, are sharply increasing in number in the absence of any official control.

According to Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) sources, a large number of registered and unregistered autorickshaws are taking to the city roads every day and most of those do not meet the environmental standard in the country.

Although BRTA, last year, tried to curtail the number of autorickshaws and tempos in four city corporations by drastically limiting issuance of registrations, the move came to a halt as a local tempo manufacturing company moved to the court and obtained an injunction against the move recently.

The tempo manufacturer challenged the decision to register 200 tempos against 3,500 autorickshaws annually and said it was 'discriminatory' against tempos. Taking advantage of the situation, thousands of these two-stroke vehicles are now getting registered across the country.

BRTA had set a ceiling of 30,000 autorickshaws, 2,000 See Page 12 Col 1

1 killed, 16 hurt as train hits truck in city

By Staff Correspondent
A baby was killed and at least 16 people including the baby's mother were injured when a truck collided with an express train at the city's Magbazar level crossing early morning yesterday.

Railway police said the dead was identified as Shirin, aged about one year.

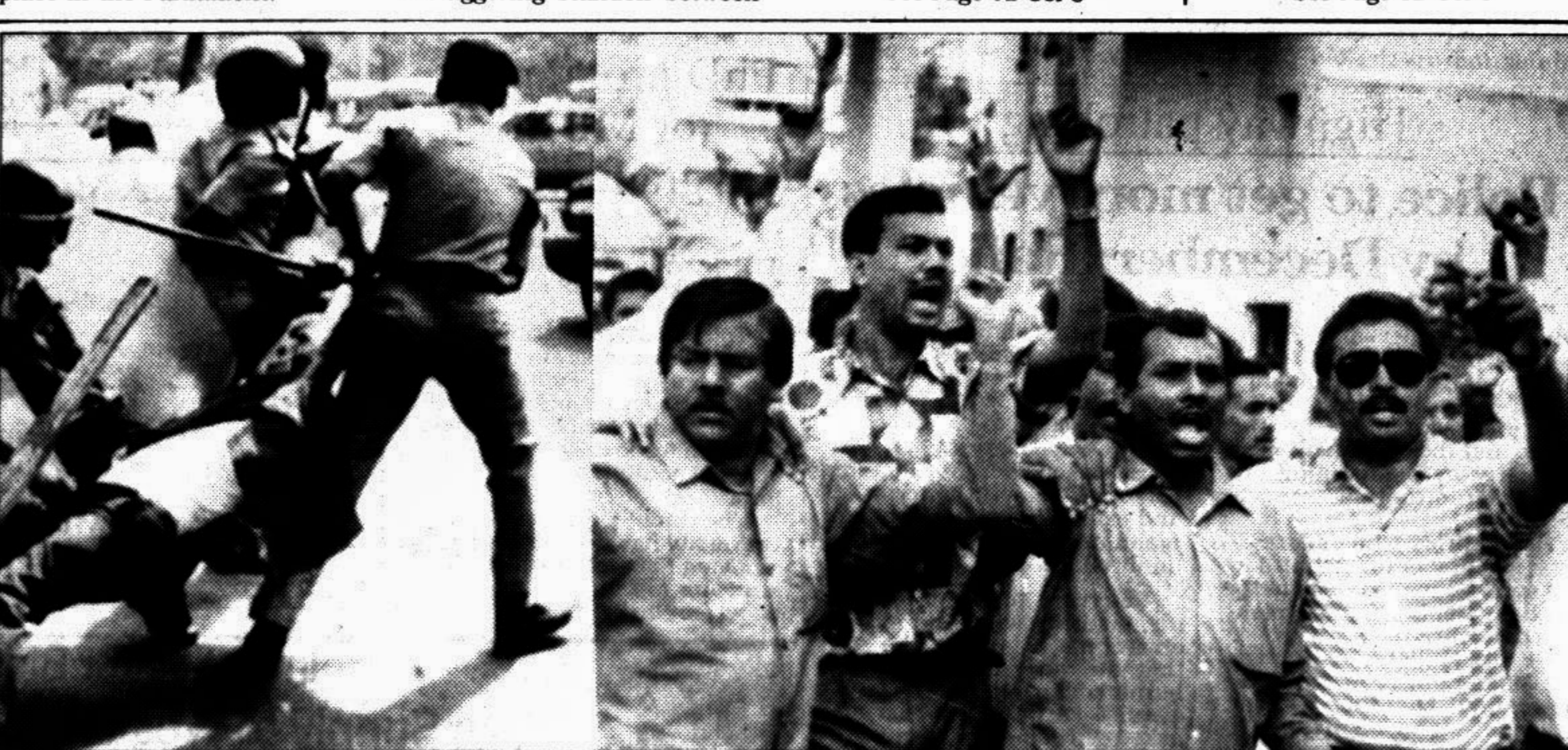
Preliminary police investigation said the truck, carrying about 20 labourers, collided with the train coming from Noakhali as there was no bar on the level crossing at about 5 am. The gateman is absconding, police said.

The truck was carrying the labourers home at a slum at Agargaon after a night-long earth-digging work at Magbazar. See Page 12 Col 5

Hartal disrupts normal life in CHT

From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Oct 29: Normal life was paralysed in three hill districts today due to a dawn-to-dusk hartal called by the Sarbadallo Parbatya Oikya Parishad, an organisation of non-tribals backed by opposition political parties.

The hartal was called in Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban hill districts, to protest the proposed peace treaty between the government and the PCJSS, the apex body of See Page 12 Col 1



Government employees demonstrating inside the Secretariat for revision of the pay scale (right) and police trying to pick up an agitating employee yesterday (left).

Strike at Mongla Port continues

KHULNA, Oct 29: Cargo handling at Mongla port remained stalled since Sunday following a conflict between labourers and stevedore association, reports UNB.

The deadlock in loading and unloading of goods may prolong as the stevedore association and port labourers stuck to their demands.

The Mongla Port Authority in a press release said to resolve the crisis, a meeting was called See Page 12 Col 8

Dhaka to get zero tariff access to EU markets from next year

GENEVA, Oct 29: The world's poorest countries have been offered better market access deals by some of the richest nations in a further bid to boost third world exports and growth, trade officials said here yesterday, reports AFP.

The European Union confirmed it would extend the preferential treatment dished out to Lome Convention members to all 48 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) as ranked by the United Nations, the Director General of the World Trade Organisation Renato Ruggiero told a briefing.

Some 71 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP) fall under the Lome purview. Nine, mainly Asian countries who fall outside the ACP umbrella stand to benefit from the EU measure, which will take effect from the beginning of January 1998.

From next year, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Laos, the Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal and Yemen will enjoy zero tariffs on all industrial and agricultural products they ship to EU markets.

Meanwhile, Canada said it would bring forward by one year to January 1, 1998 tariff reductions it was obliged to enact in 1999 under its Uruguay Round commitments.

It also said it would eliminate all tariffs on LDC product lines that were less than two per cent, trade sources said.

These offers were announced at a two-day high-level meeting for LDCs which ended Tuesday in Geneva, sponsored by the World Trade Organisation and five other inter-governmental agencies.

Securing concrete commitments from WTO members on LDC market access is a central theme of the two-day session, which is also aimed at addressing poor country supply side and technological constraints to increased trade.

LDCs account for 10 per cent of the world's population but barely one-half of one per cent of world trade, Ruggiero said.

Tariffs on LCD exports in See Page 12 Col 1

7 hurt in clash Govt employees postpone programme till Nov 2

By Staff Correspondent
At least seven people were injured, two of them seriously, when police used batons to disperse agitating government employees at the Secretariat yesterday.

They were demonstrating for the fourth day, demanding a further revision of the new pay scale and change in office hours.

Meanwhile, in a late night development the employees postponed their programme till November 2 following talks See Page 12 Col 4

PM delivers speech at LSE Possibility of any coup ruled out

LONDON, Oct 29: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has ruled out the possibility of any coup, martial law and military government in the country, report agencies.

"I certainly hope that the day of coup, martial law and military government are things of the past," she said while delivering a speech at the London School of Economics and Political Science on "Vote rigging and the solution" last evening.

She hoped that as democracy takes roots in more and more countries in the world, the international community, the United Nations and the Commonwealth would continue to play in active role in supporting democracy, holding free and fair elections and strengthening the rule of law.

Sheikh Hasina pledged to make the parliament a truly effective body by turning it into a platform to forge consensus through debate on all major issues and problems facing the country.

"Not only should the parliament serve as a body to frame laws but it should become a platform to forge consensus," Sheikh Hasina said that she had introduced the weekly Prime Minister's Question Hour programme, ensured her regular presence in the House. "Our See Page 12 Col 7

Khaleda trying to foil signing of CHT treaty: AL

Ruling Awami League yesterday squarely blamed BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia for trying to foil a proposed peace treaty between the government and the PCJSS on Chittagong Hill Tracts, reports UNB.

To foil the peace initiative in the CHT, Begum Zia is making confusing and untrue statements against country's independence and sovereignty," a meeting of Awami League president observed.

"In the name of creating 'Ashanti Bahini', BNP leadership is pushing the country into conflict and provoking racial and ethnic strife," the meeting noted with deep anguish.

Acting Awami League President and Forest and Environment Minister Begum Sajeda Chowdhury presided over the See Page 12 Col 8

Khaleda, Golam Azam hold meet BNP, Jamaat to launch simultaneous movement

A meeting between BNP and Jamaat yesterday decided to launch a simultaneous movement on common programmes for 'safeguarding' country's independence, sovereignty and integrity, reports UNB.

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia and Jamaat-e-Islami Amir Prof Golam Azam led the two sides in the 70-minute discussion on the country's latest political and economic situation and other national issues.

The meeting, held at 29 Minto Road, the official residence of Begum Zia, decided that programmes would be chalked out through mutual discussion and enforced simultaneously.

A spokesman said the leaders did not discuss forming any alliance or launching movement from a single platform. "They preferred launching simultaneous anti-government agitation."

The meeting especially focused on the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) issue and decided to build greater unity with all nationalist, democratic and Islamic forces to protect the integrity of the country.

After the talks, Golam Azam told newsmen that they decided to throw simultaneous programme which turned out to be See Page 12 Col 7

Autorickshaw drivers, students clash in Khulna: 30 hurt

From Staff Correspondent
KHULNA, Oct 29: At least 30 people including 21 students of the Govt B College were injured in a fierce clash with autorickshaw drivers at Daulatpur today.

The angry students burnt seven autorickshaws, ransacked the autorickshaw drivers' union office and two private cars during the clash that lasted for about 30 minutes.

Police lobbed 17 teargas shells and fired six shots to bring the situation under control.

Witnesses and Principal Zafar Imam of B College said that the clash began at around 10 am when a group of autorickshaw drivers attacked a road barricade put up by students on the road near Daulatpur bus stand to protest the death of Ismail Hossain, a student of the Botany department See Page 12 Col 2

TOMORROW

The curtain opens on Bangladesh's art Olympiad, the 8th Asian Art Biennale, on November 6. The day will also mark the grand finale for the participating artists with the announcement of the Grand Prize awards. Critics say the new generation artists are in search of an Asian identity. The latest Biennale is a witness to the emerging intellectual and emotional reality.

Read this week's Star Weekend Magazine Cover Story on 8th Asian Art Biennale

The Daily Star on the internet <http://www.dailystarnews.com>

Inside Today Article

Judiciary Not Above Board: Chief Justice
Column: Between the Lines
by Kuldeep Nayyar
Page 4

Business

Major stock markets bounce back quickly: Analysts, fund managers warn of more volatility ahead
DSE index rises on higher trading
Pages 8,9

Supplement

Today's issue of The Daily Star contains a two-page special supplement on 'Cosmetics' Pages 6,7

Oli Ahmed tells The Daily Star Peace treaty should be signed with India, not PCJSS

By Nurul Kabir

Former chief of the National Committee on the Chittagong Hill Tracts (NCCHT) Col (Retd) Oli Ahmed believes that no agreement with any tribal organisation can bring peace in the troubled Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

For peace and stability in the CHT, Bangladesh actually needs to sign an accord with India, says Oli Ahmed, former convener of the NCCHT.

A leader of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Ahmed, who headed the NCCHT, a ten-member committee comprising MPs from both the then ruling party and the opposition from 1992 to 1996, made this observation late last week.

Claiming that the NCCHT headed by him had always been transparent about negotiations with the tribal leaders, Oli Ahmed also demanded that the government must make the draft of the accord public before signing the agreement.

Asked to comment on the government's plan to sign a peace agreement with the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) Ahmed said: "We all want peace in the trouble-ridden hill region, but no agreement with any organisation of the tribal people of the area would bring in peace there."

Explaining his position, Ahmed, who had visited the Chakma refugees living in camps in Tripura and held several rounds of official and unofficial talks with the Indian authorities, said that his experiences with the NCCHT convinced him that the PCJSS had been operating under "strong influence of the government of India."

"I am afraid, at the instigation of India, some other tribal groups would come up to create fresh problems in the CHT, even after a 'peace agreement' is signed with the PCJSS in the near future," said Ahmed. "In that case, what is the use of signing a peace treaty with the See Page 12 Col 3



PW-33 tells court Not a single shot was fired from Bangabandhu's house

A security guard of assassinated President Sheikh Mujib told the court yesterday that he had to make a statement on the killing of a colleague near Bangabandhu's house, but never asked him to make one on the August 15 assassination episode, reports UNB.

"I made a statement on the death of Driver Shamsul to an enquiry body of my regiment in Comilla," Havildar (retd) Selimuddin said during cross-examination by a defence lawyer at Dhaka District and Sessions Judge Court.

Replying to a query from advocate Abdur Razzak Khan, the PW-33 told the court that the investigation took place after one or two months of the incident. "Except this, I did not make any statement to any authority except the CID."

All the previous 32 witnesses said they didn't make any statement to any authority other than CID on the August 15 tragedy.

Selim, however, said that he did not know if the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) had brought his statement from the Moynamati Cantonment.

The PW-33 said he heard that an autopsy of Shamsul was done at Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in Dhaka. But, he denied a suggestion that CID didn't take the post-mortem report as it indicated that Shamsul was killed by bullet.

Shamsul, a sepoy of a seven-member team led by witness Selim, was on patrol duty around Bangabandhu's residence. See Page 12 Col 6

Times-Bangla Trust Newsmen, others reject proposal for voluntary retirement

Journalists, press workers and employees of four newspapers and periodicals of the Times-Bangla Trust have decided not to go on voluntary retirement as announced by the Information Ministry until they receive their lawful dues, reports UNB.

The decision was taken yesterday at a joint meeting of the pressmen of the four publications — Dainik Bangla, Bangladesh Times, weekly Bichitra and fortnightly Ananda Bichitra run under the Trust — at the Dainik Bangla newsroom with senior journalist Nirmal Sen in the chair.

Addressing the meeting, Nirmal Sen said we will not retire voluntarily as the instruction of retirement by the Information Ministry is not lawful. "So, the question does not arise to accept it."

"We had repeatedly tried to have a specific announcement regarding our legal dues from the concerned authorities, but till yesterday evening the Information Ministry did not clarify anything although we have been asked to go on voluntary retirement by 5 pm today," Nirmal Sen said.

Strike at RU to protest 20pc cut in pension money

From Our Correspondent
RAJSHAHI, Oct 29: A day-long strike was observed on Rajshahi University campus today.

Rajshahi University Teachers' Association and Rajshahi University Officer-Karmachari Oikya Parishad jointly called the strike to protest the 20 per cent cut in pension money of the university teachers, officers and employees.

No class was held and all offices remained closed during the strike period. Plying of vehicles was also suspended.



A jungle cat caught and killed by a group of children at Shambhuganj in Mymensingh on Tuesday. The jungle cat, known as Bagdas, is facing extinction. —Star photo

Steps to be taken against illegal structures along Buriganga

The government has decided to take necessary steps against illegal establishments set up on the banks of Buriganga for saving it from illegal occupation and water pollution, report agencies.

The steps will be taken on the basis of reports to be prepared on the legal status of 113 identified establishments on the banks of the river.

The decision was taken at an inter-ministerial meeting on "Save Buriganga" held in the city yesterday with Environment and Forest Minister Sajeda Chowdhury in the chair.

The meeting expressed deep concern over acute water pollution due to indiscriminate dumping of wastes by the industrial units on the banks. See Page 12 Col 1

DSE share prices up

By Rafiq Hasan
Share prices at the Dhaka Stock Exchange went up yesterday after the previous day's fall.

As the stock markets throughout the world showed an upward trend, Dhaka's share market posted a moderate gain of five points in its All Share Price Index, DSE sources said.

Out of 138 issues traded yesterday, prices of 84 issues gained and those of 53 suffered loss while 1 remained unchanged.

The DSE's All Share Price Index rose to 815.11 points from the previous day's 810.12 points and its Market Capitalisation surged to Tk 6900.32 crore from Tk 6917.68 crore.

The volume of trading increased to 7.41 lakh shares and debentures from 7.13 lakh and the value to Tk 10.11 crore from Tk 8.82 crore, reflecting a See Page 12 Col 7