

## CHT talks reach crucial stage

By Special Correspondent  
Negotiators were trying to finalise the draft of an agreement to end the decades-old insurgency in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) late last night.

The talks between the National Committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts (NCCHT) and the Parbhatya Chittagong Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) began at 3:30 in the afternoon and were continuing till the writing of this report at 12:15 last night.

It was being held at the state guest house Padma after remaining in limbo for the past two days when two sides conducted informal negotiations.

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## Hasina assures non-govt pry teachers of a lasting solution

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said all problems of non-government primary school teachers will be solved gradually, reports UNB.

The government is going to introduce a modern and balanced education policy aimed at solving all problems in the education sector, including those of teachers, students and educational institutions, she said.

"We are looking for a lasting solution to your problems so that you would not need to agitate time and again", she said while addressing representatives of the non-government primary school teachers at ICC in the city yesterday.

Members of the Non-government Primary School Teachers Association from across the country came to the Prime Minister's office and place their various demands, including nationalisation of the registered non-government primary schools.

"I'm very much aware of the problems of the teachers, the architects of the nation," Hasina said adding that successive governments in the previous years assured the teachers several times, but they failed to follow up their commitments in action.

"It may take time, but I can assure you of an effective and permanent solution," she assured the teachers.

## Lailatul Barat on Dec 15

The Holy Lailatul Barat will be observed on the night of December 15, the National Moon Sighting Committee announced in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

The Committee at a meeting said that since the Shaban moon was not sighted yesterday anywhere in the country the month of Shaban will be counted from December 2 and the 14th Shaban (Shab-e-Barat) will fall on the night of December 15.

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

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## Month-long UP polls begin today

By Nurul Kabir

Election of union parishes in the country begins this morning amidst apprehension of widespread violence.

The Election Commission has identified 13,630 polling centres, out of a total of 39,728, as trouble-prone, 1983 as less risky and 24,215 as normal. Rival political parties have been actively backing their respective candidates, although officially the local level polls are to be held on non-party basis.

The polls will be held for 4318 UPs, out of the 4468 local bodies. According to the schedule announced by the EC, it will take the whole of December to complete the polls in phases.

According to EC estimates, around 4.79 crore voters are to choose their representatives from a total of 2,04,908 candi-

dates. Of the candidates, 44,421 women are fighting for 12,954 reserved seats.

The voters of each UP constituency will elect a chairman and 12 members. Of the 12, nine seats are open for both male and female candidates and three are reserve seats for women.

Some 1,725 candidates including 37 for the posts of UP chairman and 592 women for reserve seats have already been elected unopposed.

Thana level officials have been appointed Returning Officers of the polling centres. For smooth holding of elections,

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One killed, 55 injured in pre-polls violence

By Staff Correspondent

One person was killed and at least 55 others were injured in separate clashes yesterday, day before the Union Parishad election.

Our Correspondent from Narasingdi reports: One person was killed and 10 others injured in pre-polls violence at Chardighali union of Sadar thana.

The clash took place between two member candidates of Ward Number 5 of Duani village concerning shifting of a voting centre.

The voting centre was shifted this year from its usual venue at the Junior High School at Duani village to a madrasah in the neighbouring Araian village.

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## Sharif to fight 'conspiracy' by Leghari, Chief Justice

ISLAMABAD, Nov 30: A defiant Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif today accused both the president and chief justice of staging a conspiracy to undermine his 10-month-old government, reports AP.

In a televised address to the nation, Sharif vowed to fight on. "I have uncovered a greater, deeper conspiracy ... But I will fight," said Sharif in a 30-minute speech.

He accused both President Farooq Ahmed Leghari and Chief Justice Sajjad Ali Shah of obstructing Parliament, tossing out legislation and waging a campaign to unseat him.

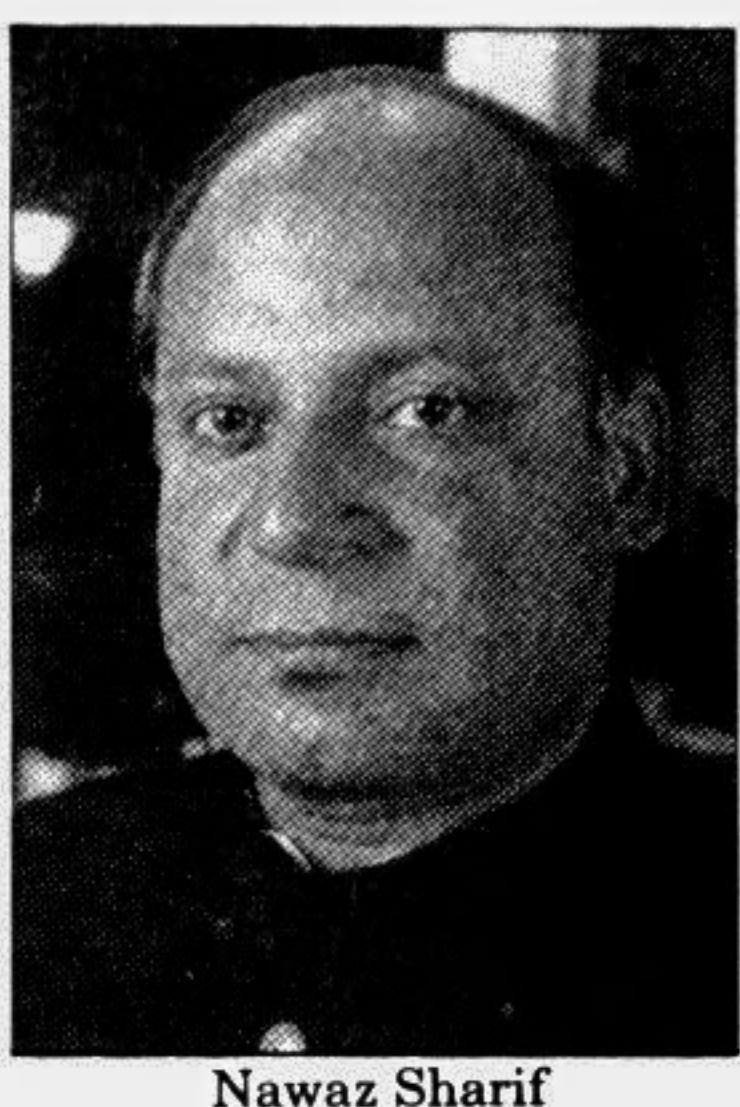
"They have done a great crime against the people ... I will not allow the people to become a victim to this conspiracy," he said.

The political crisis that has pitted the prime minister against both the Chief Justice and President has virtually paralysed the country and has some people fearing it could prompt Pakistan's powerful military to seize power again.

In neighbouring Rawalpindi where the army is headquartered, the Chief of Staff Gen Jhangir Karamat was holding an unscheduled meeting of senior generals tonight.

For the past two weeks Karamat has been cast in the role of mediator, an unusual one for an army chief in Pakistan where historically the army has thrown out elected government.

Earlier today, the Chief Justice accused Sharif of engineering. See Page 12 Col 3



Nawaz Sharif



Anti-hartal activists chasing pickets on the city's North South Road during hartal hours yesterday.

— Star photo

## One killed, 60 hurt during hartal

By Staff Correspondent

At least one person was killed and 60 people including some policemen were injured in sporadic clashes in the capital during a BNP-called half-day hartal in the six divisional head quarters yesterday.

The hartal hours, beginning from 6 am, passed off by and large peacefully in the other divisional headquarters of Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal and Sylhet, reports reading here said.

The hartal was called to protest an alleged attempt on the life of BNP chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia during her visit to Chittagong Tuesday last.

Jamaat-e-Islami, Jatiya Party (Z-M) and three other small parties supported the hartal.

In the capital, Hafizuddin, 28, a rickshaw puller, was fatally injured when a bomb exploded near New Market at about 9:30 in the morning. Both his arms were blown away in the explosion. Haliz, son of one Ismail Hossain of Tejgaon area,

died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital at about 5:30 pm.

Eighteen of the injured people were admitted to the DMCH. Most of them were injured in bomb explosions, hospital sources said.

Of the injured policemen, Habibur Rahman was admitted to the Rajbari Police Hospital with bomb injury, police said.

A total of 70 people were arrested from different areas of the city and 11 cases were initiated against 33 of them for "acts of violence," police said.

Clashes between supporters and opponents of hartal took place at Naya Bazar, Makhali, Jatrabari, Dhaka University, Farmgate and some other areas.

At the rally in Naya Bazar area, the rival activists clashed for about four hours from 9 am, exploding bombs and hurling brickbats at each other, leaving 35 people including 4 policemen injured, witnesses said. Police hurled tear gas shells to disperse the clashing groups.

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## Ctg rally demands arrest of killers of 3 AL workers

CHITTAGONG, Nov 30: Speakers at a protest rally today demanded immediate arrest and punishment to the killers of three activists of Awami League and its front organisations, reports BSS.

Jointly organised by Chittagong city, district north and south chapters of Awami League, the rally was held here at the Shaheed Minar premises.

The rally was addressed by Chittagong City Corporation Mayor ABM Madihuq Chowdhury, Awami League Commerce and Industry Secretary Akhteruzzaman Chowdhury Babu, Abul Kashem Master MP, MA Salam, Muslemuddin Ahmed, and Dr Sayedur Rahman, AL leader Ishaque Mia presided.

The speakers said people of this country will resist the policies of killing, coup and conspiracy.

Criticising the destructive and negative policies of BNP, they said its ulterior motive is now to create chaos and mislead the people.

CCC Mayor said whenever Khaleda Zia comes to the port city, it results in loss of lives and destruction of property.

The Mayor demanded that

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## 7-party firm to resist accord on CHT at any cost

The 7-party alliance at a meeting in the city yesterday reiterated its firm determination to resist any agreement on CHT against national interest and Constitution at any cost with the help of people, reports UNB.

The meeting in a resolution said that the alliance would not allow anyone to sign any accord contrary to the interest of the country and the people.

It congratulated the people of Chittagong city and five other divisional headquarters for observing yesterday's hartal spontaneously and making it a complete success.

The alliance conveyed sympathy to those injured in the hands of Awami terrorists' and demanded immediate and unconditional release of all arrested leaders and workers.

With a note of warning, the meeting said the son of Chittagong, Pabna, Rajshahi, Khulna, Jessore, Jhalakati and other parts of the country is being stained with the blood of political activists and communists.

## South Asian music festival begins today

The first-ever South Asian music festival begins in the city today, reports BSS.

Besides artists from host Bangladesh, some 50 performers including dancers from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, the Maldives and Bhutan are expected to take part in the four-day programme.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to inaugurate the function at the indoor stadium at Mirpur in the morning.

The festival will start at 6 pm everyday simultaneously in the National Museum Auditorium, Osmany Memorial Hall, Shishu Academy Auditorium, and Gana Granthagar Auditorium.

## Varsity officers' 3-day strike begins tomorrow

Dhaka University Officers' Association will go on a three-day work stoppage from tomorrow, responding to the call of Bangladesh Inter-University Officers' Federation, reports UNB.

The strike will be enforced to realise their 4-point demand, including revision of pay scale and provision ensuring their representation to university senates and syndicates.

Officers of other universities will also observe the programme, said a DU press release yesterday.

## Two oil cos place revised budget

## Cairn's up by one-third, Occidental's four times

Star Report

Unnecessary expenditure made by foreign oil and gas companies working for exploring and developing gas fields will increase the cost of gas produced by them, according to official sources.

Both Cairn of UK and Occidental of USA, which signed production sharing contracts (PSCs) with the government nearly three years ago to explore oil and gas in Bangladesh, have already spent more than their originally approved budgets and have submitted revised budgets to the government for approval.

Cairn, which succeeded in striking gas in Sangu in January last, has placed a revised budget which is nearly 100 million US dollars more than the original budget of 188 million dollars.

Similarly, Occidental placed a revised budget which includes an additional budget for Moulvibazar 1 (Magurcharia) alone. The original budget for Moulvibazar 1 was 8 million US dollars. The revised budget proposes an additional expenditure of nearly 35 million dollars.

A high official of the government however said that these "escalated budgets" were being dealt with and the government would not approve those unless and until it is con-

vinced about the rationale behind the revised budget.

Sources said that the government has already sought explanation from Cairn for the enhanced expenditure and "it is likely that a big chunk of the added costs would be slashed."

Meanwhile, the foreign companies have succeeded in

Japan to provide Tk 103cr for reconstruction of 5 bridges

Bangladesh will receive a grant of Taka 102.98 crore from Japan for the project of reconstruction of five small and medium bridges on Dhaka-Chittagong highway, reports BSS.

An agreement in this regard was signed in the city yesterday between the two governments.

The total cost of the project has been estimated at Taka 123.46 crore. The project work which will begin soon is scheduled to be completed by March 2000.

With this grant, the total commitment of Japanese grant assistance to Bangladesh will stand at about Tk 9544 crore.

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— Star photo

## World AIDS Day today

World AIDS Day will be observed in the country as elsewhere in the world today to create awareness among the people about the impact of the fatal disease, reports UNB.

On the eve of the day, President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave separate messages, laying emphasis on making the nation aware about the