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PM's fresh call to BNP

Return to JS, demands will be considered

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday made a fresh call to the opposition to return to parliament and resolve all problems through discussion in the House, reports UNB.

"We will consider all your demands ... come back to the House, take part in discussions and make the parliament effective," she told the opposition while addressing the golden jubilee celebration of Bangladesh Chhatra League at Ramna Batamul.

The Prime Minister said, "We want the main opposition BNP to return to the House and we will accept their demands through negotiations. We want the opposition leader to take part in discussions for solution to all problems."

Earlier, the opposition was allowed in the House to take part in discussions, but the leader of the opposition ignored our call and now is blaming the government without any reason, she added.

Stability is essential for the development and progress of the country and the opposition should return to the parliament shunning the street movement, which has been inflicting sufferings on the public life, the Prime Minister said.

"Now there is no need for any movement as the present government is pledge-bound to quit power upon completion of its tenure."

A large number of students from different educational institutions gathered at the lush golden Jubilee Park to join the

celebration.

Chhatra League president Enamul Haq Shameem presided over the meeting, which was also addressed by Chhatra League general secretary Ishaq Ali Khan Panna.

50 die as bus crashes into burning oil tanker in Pakistan

JHELUM, Pakistan, Jan 4: Cranes removed the twisted and charred remains of several vehicles today that were involved in a fiery crash that killed at least 50 people and injured seven others on a narrow rural road in eastern Punjab province, reports AP.

There were conflicting casualty reports from Saturday's accident near Jhelum, about 115 kilometres (69 miles) southeast of the federal capital of Islamabad.

Police said 25 people were killed while rescue workers put the death toll beyond 50 and some eyewitnesses said as many as 65 people died.

Many of the dead were passengers on an overcrowded bus which slammed into an oil

Israeli FM resigns

TEL AVIV, Jan 4: Bringing the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to the brink of collapse, Foreign Minister David Levy announced today that he is "no longer a member of this government," reports AP.

Levy bitterly denounced Netanyahu's 19-month-old government for abandoning the peace process with the Arabs and ignoring the mounting problems of Israel's poor and unemployed.

Vehicles

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overseeing the operation of ferry services decided to suspend ferry services till further notice.

ULFA leader

From page 1
tarian ground.

The BBC further said Delhi has requested Bangladeshi to hand over Barua to Indian authorities. But Bangladeshi Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad said his government is yet to receive any such formal or informal request.

Azad said the government will release information regarding Barua if he was found linked to ULFA after interrogation.

Quoting a high police official the BBC said that there is no prisoner exchange accord between Bangladesh and India. Bangladesh can take legal action against the arrested for illegally entering into Bangladesh.

UNB adds: Police will file three cases today against Barua who was arrested along with two of his accomplices recently in the city.

Barua will face cases for his illegal stay in Bangladesh, possessing foreign currency and for carrying forged Bangladeshi passports bearing false names and addresses, police said.

Police recovered photocopies of several forged passports from Golap Barua's possession in which he used two false names — John David Mornarma and George William Bernard.

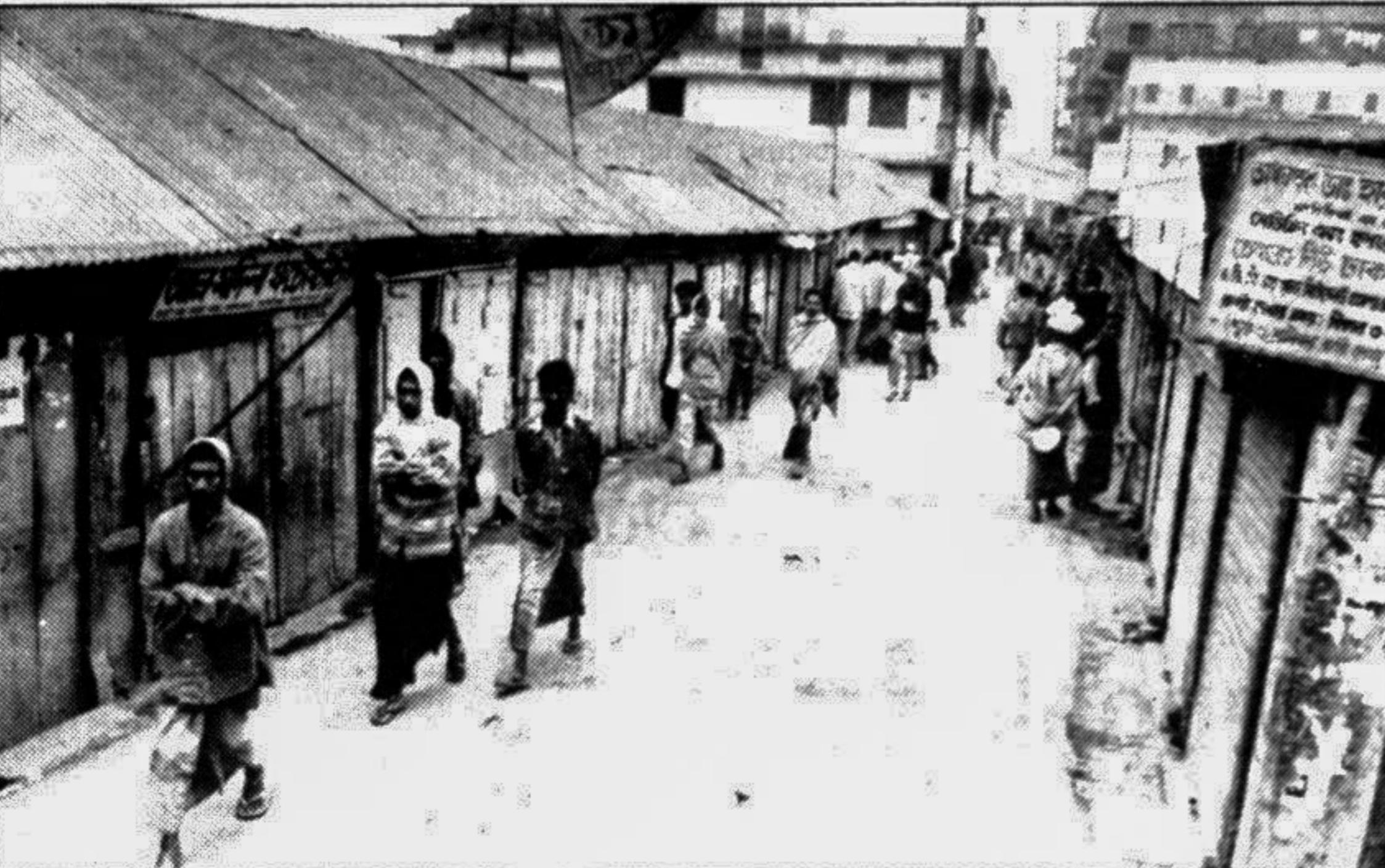
His address was shown in the passports, issued in June 1996, as Tahirpur thana of Sunamganj district.

Besides, while recently visiting South Africa, Barua also reportedly used a passport as a South African citizen named Abdul Aziz, police said.

Police recovered some foreign currencies, including Indian rupees and US dollars, worth over Tk two lakhs from Barua's possession.

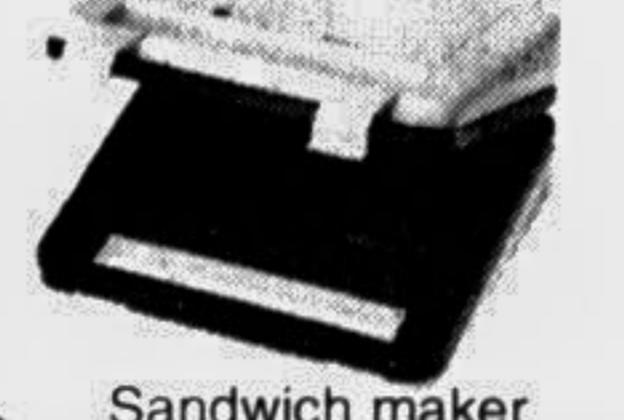
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Shops and business establishments in Aganagar Union of Keraniganj thana remained closed yesterday as the situation did not return to normalcy following two gruesome killings there on the previous day.

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Bangabandhu Murder Case

100 MPs had charged Mushtaque with Aug 15 killings: PW-43

Some 100 MPs had refused to express their allegiance to President Khandaker Mushtaque Ahmed when he called them to Bangabandhu two months after the gruesome killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, reports UNB.

They also blasted Mushtaque and charged him and others with the August 15 killings, the then MP Prof Khorshed Alam, a prosecution witness in the Bangabandhu Murder Case, told the court when the trial proceedings resumed yesterday.

Prof Alam, the then president of Comilla district Awami League, made his deposition to the trial court as PW-43 when it was adjourned on November 25 before the winter vacation. He is also the current president of district AL.

During his cross-examination yesterday, Prof Alam, also a former district governor, said Khandaker Mushtaque Ahmed called all the then parliamentarians at a meeting at the President House sometime in October.

Some 100 MPs were present at the meeting ... before attending it, we had discussion among ourselves that we would ask Mushtaque as to how he became President and tell him that we don't accept you as the President," said the witness.

As Sirajul Haq MP and others in their deliberations

echoed the consensus voice, the PW-43 said Mahbub Alam Chashi and Mushtaque government's minister Taheruddin Thakur tried to persuade the legislators to their side saying the time had changed.

"Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has been killed. No gain will be achieved saying Mujib's name. It's better to support the Mushtaque government," Chashi and Thakur were quoted by Prof Khorshed Alam as saying.

The witness said the meeting was over after the speech of Sirajul Haq, who directly charged Mushtaque and his associates with the killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib and others, and finally refused to recognise the 'killer' government.

Prof Khorshed Alam said the major whose name he had mentioned in the deposition were present while they had the meeting with Mushtaque. "We, through their conversation, clearly realised that Mushtaque and his accomplices had killed Bangabandhu."

He, however, said they could not inform the press about the protest made by the MPs. "I also could not file a case as the infamous Indemnity Act was imposed barring the trial of killers of Father of the Nation and others," the witness said.

"I informed Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, but

he laughed it away and ignored Khandaker Mushtaque," said the witness when he was asked if he had informed anyone that Mushtaque was used to criticise Bangabandhu and his policies.

As asked if he came to know that India, Pakistan and America were behind the killing, Prof Alam replied, "I don't know who were behind the curtain. But I knew that Pakistan hastily recognised the Mushtaque government as soon as it had assumed the power."

The witness was cross-examined by defence lawyers Khan Saifur Rahman and Gazi Zillur Rahman when the court of Dhaka District and Sessions Judge resumed in the chilly morning after more than a month's winter vacation.

Of the total 19 named in the case, the arrested accused were produced before the court. They were Lt Col (dismissed) Syed Farooq Rahman, Lt Col (retd) Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, Lt Col (LPR) Muhiddin, Hon Capt (retd) Abdul Wahab Joardar and former minister Taheruddin Thakur.

The judge, on request from the lawyers on both sides, decided to hold the trial proceedings three days a week during the holy month of Ramadan — Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. The court resumes at 9:30 am today.

RUTA polls today

From RU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Jan 4: The election to the executive committee of Rajshahi University Teachers' Association (RUTA) will be held tomorrow.

Two panels — Yellow and White — are contesting the polls.

Pro-Awami League teachers supported by a faction of Pro-BNP group have formed the Yellow Panel while White Panel has been formed by moderate teachers, who claim themselves as genuine BNP.

Professor M Abdur Razzak of Statistics Department and Professor Muazzaf Hussain of Applied Physics are contesting for the posts of president and general secretary respectively from Yellow Panel.

The White Panel's candidates for the posts of president and general secretary are Professor M Azhar Ali of Chemistry Department and Professor Asrafuzzaman of Social Work Department.

About 598 teachers are expected to cast their votes from 8:30 am to 1 pm without any break.

2 doctors beaten up in Manikganj

MANIKGANJ, Jan 4: A group of agitating people today beat up two doctors of the district hospital alleging that their negligence caused the death of a patient.

Witnesses said Shah Alam of village Scota near the town died yesterday at the hospital while he was under treatment.

Following the death, a group of angry people attacked Dr Abdul Ghani and Dr Alim. They alleged that Shah Alam died due to negligence of the doctors.

All the doctors of the hospital have been abstaining from their work protesting the attack.

ID police officially began investigating the incident, a

No arrest yet in Keraniganj

OC, 2 other police officials suspended

By Razir Rahman

Keraniganj police could not arrest any of the alleged killers of Torikullah or Nurul Islam till yesterday.

Meanwhile, three police officials of Keraniganj thana, including the Officer in-Charge, were suspended yesterday.

The suspension order came after Inspector General of Police M Ismail Hossain and DIG Dhaka Range Nurul Alam visited the spot.

The officials are: OC Noor Mohammad, SI Abu Taher and ASI Ashraf (duty officer).

Torikullah, newly elected chairman of Aganagar Union parishad under Keraniganj thana was shot dead by some unidentified persons Saturday afternoon. Within about two hours, Nurul Islam, a freedom fighter, was hacked and burnt to death in the same area, allegedly by Torikullah's men.

Keraniganj police only said yesterday that the killings were sequel to a long-drawn rivalry between the two persons.

This correspondent, during a visit to the area, found local people tight-lipped, not to earn the wrath of any of the groups supporting the two persons. But some people claimed that Nurul Islam was not involved in the killing of Torikullah, who was shot dead by some unidentified persons Saturday afternoon. Within about two hours, Nurul Islam, a freedom fighter, was hacked and burnt to death in the same area, allegedly by Torikullah's men.

Some local people, however, said they thought that an influential leader of old Dhaka might be behind the killing of Torikullah because he was growing as a potential rival of Torikullah.

Police said the two bodies were handed over to their families.

No untoward incident was reported till filing of this report last night. Huge police force was deployed at Aganagar, across the river Buriganga.

Meanwhile, Keraniganj unit of Awami League in a press release condemned the killings and alleged that Torikullah was killed due to conflict among local factions of BNP.

Police said the two bodies were handed over to their families.

24 more killed in Algeria

ALGIERS, Jan 4: About two dozen more people died in weekend attacks while the government drew fire today for failing to prevent the slaughter of more than 400 peasants, the worst massacre of a nearly 6-year-old insurgency, reports AP.

Scattered shootings, slashings and a bombing outside a mosque shook the Algiers region since Friday.

Polls violence in Chandina: 1 killed, 30 hurt

COMILLA, Jan 4: A young man was killed and 30 others including four policemen were injured today in a clash between the supporters of the two chairman candidates at Shuhilpur union under Chandina thana of the district, reports UNB.

The victim was identified as Mohan Mia, 32, son of late Ali Mia, of village Teerchar in Chandina.

Witnesses said the clash erupted in the morning between the rival groups at Bataghosi Government Primary School centre during re-election of the union parishad.

Heavy exchange of gunshots and blast of crackers created panic in the area, they added.

Police opened 44 rounds of blank shots to bring the situation under control.

He said that the mob had taken a police personnel hostage forcibly. The police personnel was rescued after dispersing the mob by opening fire, he added.

The clashes marked by exchange of fire, continued for about one hour, he said.

Deputy Commissioner of Chittagong K M Habibullah said the acquired land was later handed over to the cantonment authority when the situation came under control.

The occupant, belonging to 222 families, vacated the land, he said.

He said that the occupants were staying there illegally even after payment of compensation.

He also informed that a one-member committee was formed with ADC (General) to probe the incident. He has been asked to submit report within 15 days.

The DAB chief further said that work stoppage or chanting of slogans by the EWA leaders and supporters was completely illegal. DAB is a non-profit voluntary socio-medical service organisation registered with the Ministry of Social Welfare and there is no legal provision for trade unionism in such organisations. We are determined not to concede to the illegal and unreasonable demands of EWA, he asserted.

Asked what stopped them from taking disciplinary actions against 'unruly' employees, the DAB President said the management was still willing to forge a negotiation with the

EDN board

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their matter.

But EWA rejected the decision and continued to agitate inside the hospital.

Meanwhile, EWA staged sit-in and went for one-hour work stoppage from December 29 to January 3, two-hour yesterday and is scheduled to go for a three-hour work stoppage today.

President of DAB Prof Dr Wahiduddin Ahmed, who read out a statement signed by Fasihuddin Mahtab at yesterday's press conference, said that the 1996 service rules were essential for the BIRDEM to ensure better treatment of the patients and thus uphold the image of the hospital. Under the new rules, BIRDEM is to offer better payment to the talented persons

joining on contract basis, while the authorities would enjoy the right to terminate their jobs in case of their failure to give better service."