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## Body may be set up to monitor accounting standards: PM

By Staff Correspondent  
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said that the government will consider setting up a regulatory body to monitor accounting standards and practices in the country.  
She made the announcement yesterday in response to demands from chartered accounts.  
"This sounds to be a good proposal," she told the inaugural session of 13th South Asian Federation of Accountants (SAFA) conference in the city.  
"In the interest of achieving better accountability and transparency of the published financial statements, the government will look into this," she said.  
The inaugural function of the two-day conference was also addressed by Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria, Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed, Former Finance Minister Saifur Rahman, MP, presiding.  
See Page 12 Col 4

## A well prepared plan needed to tackle post-flood situation: Khaleda

RAIPURA, Narsingdi, Aug 22: Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia today urged the government to tackle the post-flood situation for saving the people from hunger and diseases, reports UNB.  
Apprehending a grave post-flood situation — hunger and epidemics — the BNP Chief said a well prepared plan is needed to save the people.  
Begum Zia was making a brief speech while distributing relief among the flood victims at Atosh Ali Bazar in Raipura thana in the afternoon.  
Begum Zia urged the government to take adequate steps for sending medical teams with medicines and pure drinking water to save the people from diseases.  
The BNP chairperson renewed her call to open gruel kitchens in the worst affected areas and supply dry and cooked food every day. Wherever she visited the affected people she found people passing their days half fed or hungry.  
Begum Zia said the government has failed to mitigate the situation.  
See Page 12 Col 2

## 7-party postpones mass hunger strike programme

The BNP led seven-party alliance has postponed its August 26 programme of mass hunger strike and procession considering the suffering of the people amid continued worsening of flood situation, reports UNB.  
It was decided at a meeting of the Alliance at 29 Minto Road yesterday evening with BNP leader Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder in the chair, said a spokesman of the Alliance.  
The Alliance earlier called the programme to press for the trial of the persons responsible for the death in police custody, including Rubel, and to protest violation of human rights by the government, its misuse, and state and political terrorism.  
The meeting said the government was busy in observing various days and filing false cases against BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia along with other leaders and workers ignoring its responsibility to the people.  
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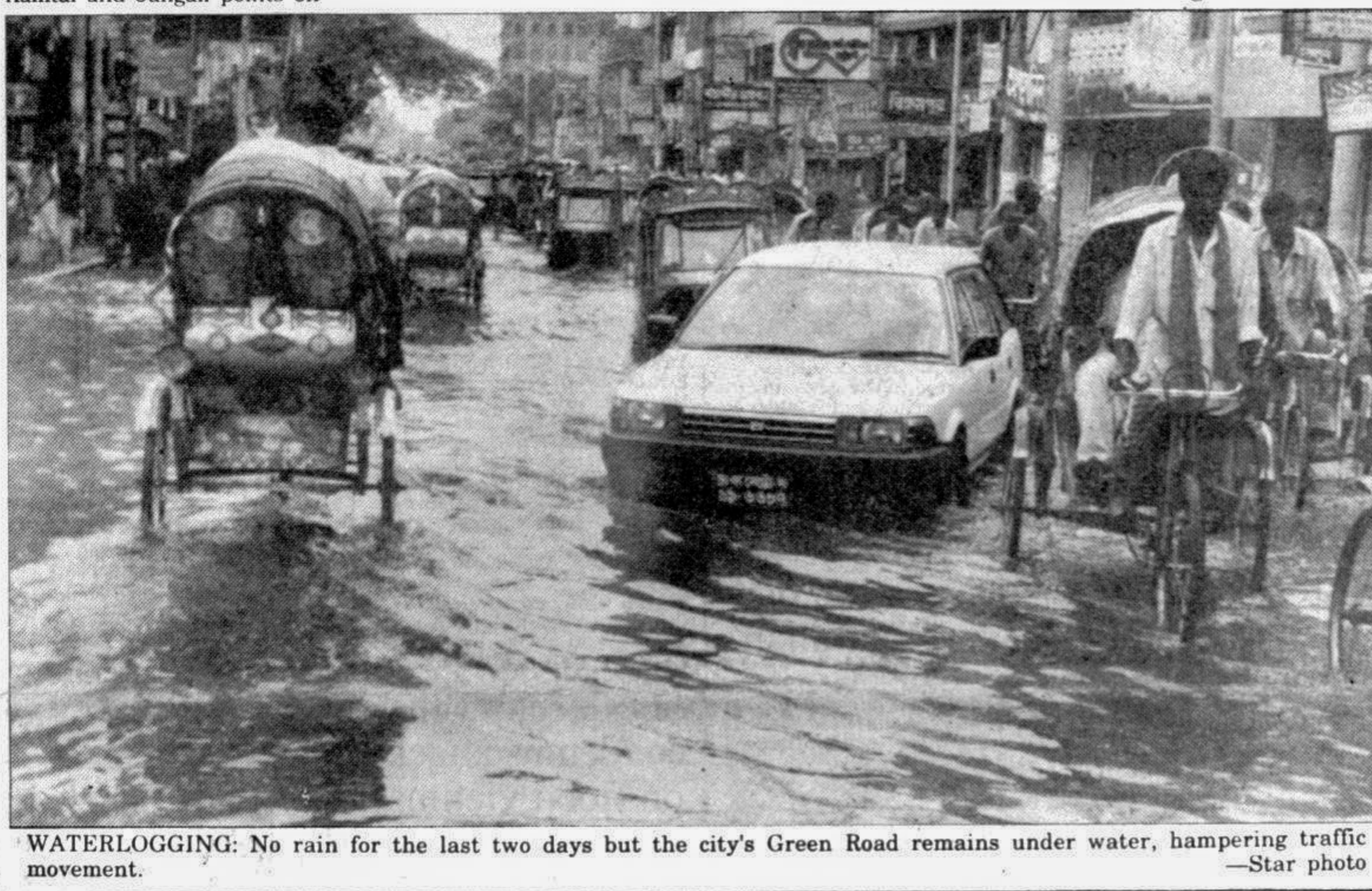
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## Flood waters submerge Dhaka-Ctg Highway at several points

# Major rivers close to highest water levels since '54

The country's flood situation has taken a 'devastating turn' as the major rivers are now close to their highest ever water levels since 1954, reports UNB.  
The Padma yesterday crossed the previous highest level of 22.97 metre at Pankha and was flowing at 23.52 metre.  
"It may turn catastrophic," said an official in the Flood Forecasting Centre.  
Traffic movement between the capital and port city Chittagong virtually came to a halt as flood waters submerged seven places on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway.  
About five kilometre of the highway went under two-foot water. Roads and Highway officials told UNB last night rolling waters caused big holes at Kamtal and Jangail points on the highway.  
About one kilometre of the highway was submerged at Keodhala and Jangail points where at least 500 yards have gone under three to four feet of water.  
Transports now take 20-21 hours to reach Dhaka from Chittagong due to disruption of the road communication.  
The Laksham police administration has advised transport owners not to drive through Daudkandi bridge.  
About 700 feet road of Dhaka-Sylhet Highway have been inundated at Borpa point in Ruppang thana of Narayan-ganj district.  
The flood waters have also threatened several embankments and dikes. DND embankment in Dhaka, flood control embankment at Rajshahi, Pabna flood control embankment, Brahmaputra embankment at Sariakandi in Bogra and some other dikes at different places were threatened as breaches or leakage have developed due to heavy pressure of waters.  
Relief Ministry control room yesterday said flood situation in 15 districts worsened further with reports of eight more deaths and inundation of new areas.  
Official said six flood-related deaths were reported from Madaripur and two from Jamalpur yesterday raising the death toll to 330.  
In addition to these, the Health Control Room sources said that four persons died of diarrhoea. Of them, two died in Moulvibazar and one each in Kurigram and Chandpur. With these the toll from diarrhoeal diseases stood at 62.  
The flood situation remained unchanged in eight districts while eight others marked a slight improvement, according to the control room.  
The situation deteriorated in Dhaka, Narayanganj, Munshiganj, Narsingdi, Manikganj, Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Faridpur, Rajbari, Madaripur, Shariatpur, Sirajganj, Bogra, Gaibandha and Chapainawabganj.  
The flood was static in Gazipur, Kishoreganj, Noakhali, Laxmipur, Chandpur, Pabna, Brahmanbaria and Kurigram.  
However, the improving situation was reported in Barisal, Rajshahi, Jessore, Khulna, Comilla, Baranagar, and Chittagong.  
See Page 12 Col 4



WATERLOGGING: No rain for the last two days but the city's Green Road remains under water, hampering traffic movement. —Star photo

## Women looking for jobs abroad 'Blanket ban' no solution, say recruiting agencies

By Reaz Ahmad  
The government has no plan to lift the ban on recruitment of Bangladeshi women for foreign labour markets, despite appeals from recruiting agencies.  
"No second thought would be given immediately," said a high official of the Labour and Manpower Ministry, referring to recruiting agencies' plea that the ban would frustrate the country's efforts for earning more foreign exchange. "The decision to impose the ban was taken by a cabinet committee after judging its probable implications," the official explained while talking to The Daily Star.  
However, Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA), apex body of some 500 manpower recruiting agencies in the country, resented the July 21 decision of women trying their luck in the burgeoning labour markets abroad. BAIRA regretted the government's taking such a decision without taking its view.  
According to official estimates, some 25 lakh expatriate Bangladeshi workers remit over Tk 6000 crore annually, which contributes to growth of the national economy. BAIRA claimed that over 10 per cent of the total remittance comes from some two lakh female Bangladeshi workers. Most of them went abroad, mainly Middle East, over the last three years to work as industrial worker, nurse, cleaner and domestic help, it said.  
President of BAIRA Mohammad Noor Ali has appealed to the Prime Minister for lifting the ban saying that the ban would frustrate the collective efforts for empowerment of women and would have its impact on foreign exchange reserve.  
All told this correspondent that according to reports available with the BAIRA, not more than one per cent of total Bangladeshi women workforce abroad had been subjected to torture. "There were some problems in Saudi Arabia, where some Bangladeshi women went to work as domestic help. But there is no complain of any sort from those who are working in Malaysian garment factories or Kuwaiti hospitals," claimed Ali.  
"The ban is not a solution. There are incidents of torture on women in our own country also," argued Ali. Officials of the country's missions in some ME countries, according to him, had provided the government with 'negative reports' just to relieve themselves from any additional responsibility.  
"This is a clear discrimination. Stoppage of legal flow would increase women trafficking," said Mohammad Mosharraf Hossain, immediate past president of BAIRA.  
Hossain said the government could at best put restriction on recruitment of domestic help in specific country or countries but, "a blanket ban would just shut the doors for many Bangladeshi skilled yet jobless women."  
On the other hand, Manpower Ministry officials said that the ban was imposed to protect women from exploitation and to ensure that they are not subjected to any form of abuse or discrimination in foreign countries.  
See Page 12 Col 3

## Grameen Bank model may usher in new paradigm of development

### Roundtable on Economics of Prof Yunus

By Staff Correspondent  
Dr Syed M Hashemi of the Grameen Trust opened the discussion saying that conventional economics is irrelevant to address poverty and that there is a need to place the central emphasis on people, on poor people, rather than 'some mystified market that neither provides for economic welfare nor can create more humane conditions.'  
Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman of BIDS said the work of Prof Yunus demonstrates the limitations of economics as a master to problems.  
He said Prof Yunus has provided new thought that almost everyone is an entrepreneur and that institutions are important for poverty alleviation.  
Prof Yunus has also revitalised the notion of ethics and economics by launching a socially conscientious programme and raised the need for implementing theories rather than remaining in academic confines.  
He said the achievement of micro-credit had been, however, modest even after 20 years of practice.  
But, he added, micro-credit had an impact on extreme manifestations of poverty. At the same time, female education and mobility of women have acted as social multipliers.  
One of the participants in the discussion, Golam Rasul, a doctor by profession, said it is his experience that Grameen Bank charges very high rates on micro-credit and that the poor people who take credits often face difficulties in repaying them.  
See Page 12 Col 7

## PSC for Block-8 uncertain

# Partner of US co to withdraw from bid

By Sharier Khan  
A partner company of a US bidder which was awarded Block-8 in the Second Round Block Bidding for oil and gas exploration in the country has decided to withdraw from the bid, sources said.  
This would mean that final negotiation and signing of a Production Sharing Contract (PSC) for Block-8 would become uncertain.  
Pangaea, a small US company formed in 1996, won block-8 although it did not have any track record or bank guarantee as required by Petrobangla. The government had earlier asked Pangaea to bring in a bigger partner and it brought in OMV late last year.  
OMV, the Austrian partner of Pangaea, has now said that it would come to invest in Bangladesh only if it was given Block-11.  
OMV was not a bidder in the Second Round Block Bidding although it had purchased data from Petrobangla before the bid was floated in May-June last year.  
The Austrian company is now saying that working in block-8 alone would not be profitable enough for its involvement. It said investment would be practical if the government also awarded the Pangaea-OMV joint venture block-11, the sources said.  
Meanwhile, moves are underway to ensure Irish company Tullow blocks 9 and 11 without any partners. So far, the government tried to find Tullow some big partners in both these blocks. Accordingly, US joint venture Chevron-Texaco and US-Malaysian joint venture Mobil-Petronas had held negotiations with Tullow and the government.  
See Page 12 Col 1

## Alleged rape of 3 students BCL calls indefinite strike at JU

By Staff Correspondent  
The ruling Awami League-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) has called an indefinite strike at Jahangirnagar University (JU) from today demanding identification and punishment of the persons responsible for raping three students of the university in the last three months.  
However, following a meeting with the Vice Chancellor in-charge, Prof Azizul Haq Bhuiyan, yesterday, BCL leaders said the viva voce for admission into the first year honours classes of the university would be kept out of the purview of the strike. The viva voce, which started Saturday, would conclude tomorrow.  
At a press conference on Friday, the BCL leaders said reports published in a section of newspapers involving one of their top leaders in the rapes were untrue, baseless and motivated.  
Different organisations including BCL, Ganotrik Chhatra Oikya (GCO) and General Students' Unity (GSU) brought out separate processions on the campus yesterday protesting the rape incidents.  
GCO and GSU have also announced programmes to stage demonstrations and bring out torch processions on the campus demanding punishment to the culprits responsible for the rapes.  
They also announced a programme to 'gherao' the VC's office on Tuesday to press home their demand.  
JU Teachers' Association (JUTA) in a statement yesterday demanded a neutral investigation into the alleged rape incidents and urged the authorities to ensure exemplary punishment to the persons responsible.  
Expressing concern over the presence of outsiders on the campus, JUTA asked the authorities to drive out all the outsiders from the campus and take action against those who provided them shelter.  
Meanwhile, the five-member committee formed to probe into the case is expected to submit its report by the end of the week.  
See Page 12 Col 1

## Rubel murder case

# Judicial body records statement of Mukuli

By Staff Correspondent  
The judicial inquiry commission probing the murder of Rubel in the custody of police yesterday recorded the statement of Mukuli Begum, a local leader of the ruling party and a neighbour of the victim.  
The commission also recorded the statement of two other businessmen of the locality, sources said.  
Rubel's mother in her statement to the CID and the judicial commission earlier said that she rushed to Mukuli Begum for help soon after getting the information of her son's arrest on July 23.  
In her statement recorded with the judicial commission Mukuli Begum acknowledged that Jahannara Begum had visited her after she learnt about her son's arrest.  
Mukuli Begum also claimed that following the request of Rubel's mother she called Ramna thana to find out his whereabouts. Ramna thana, however, informed that they did not arrest anyone by that name, she is learnt to have told the commission.  
According to Mukuli Begum, she later left the house to pickup her daughter from a coaching centre, sources said.  
The two businessmen in their statements to the judicial commission said that they knew Rubel as a gentleman and had no complaint against him.  
Meanwhile, it was learnt that AK Akram Hussain, the principal accused in the Rubel murder case, is likely to undergo an operation of his 'anal fissure' at the PG Hospital today. Akram had developed the disease almost 10 years ago and the operation is quite simple, said a doctor involved in his two week-long treatment at the hospital.  
Akram was admitted to the hospital on August 10. He was taken there on the second day of his three-day remand after only six hours interrogation by the CID.  
UNB quoting sources adds: Mukuli Begum yesterday repeated the statement she had given to CID.  
The two other persons were Quamruzzaman and Walilul Islam, owners of the Cambridge Coaching Centre and National Computer Coaching Centre respectively.  
See Page 12 Col 1

## One killed as terrorists open fire in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent  
CHITTAGONG, Aug 22: One person was killed and three others received bullet wounds when a group of armed terrorists suddenly attacked a restaurant in front of the Victoria Jute Mill at Pahartoli this afternoon, police said.  
The injured, including two jute mill workers were admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital. One of them identified as Abul Hossain succumbed to injuries at around 9 pm, hospital sources said.  
Police said the terrorists numbering four arrived by an autorickshaw in front of the restaurant and opened fire indiscriminately.  
Later, they snatched money from the cash box of the restaurant, police added.  
Protesting the incident, the jute mill workers and local people put up barricade on Dhaka-Chittagong highway halting traffic movement.  
However, none was arrested so far.  
See Page 12 Col 1

## Classes suspended CU student hurt in 'Shibir' attack, dies

From CU Correspondent  
CHITTAGONG, Aug 22: Chittagong University Authorities have suspended all classes of the university for three days till Monday following death of a student this morning.  
Sanjay Talapatra, a second year student of Fine Arts Department of the university succumbed to injuries at Chittagong Medical College Hospital at around 7:30 am.  
He was injured in an attack allegedly by the activists of Chhatra Shibir at Chittagong Railway Station on Thursday.  
All-party Student Alliance brought out a procession on the campus in the morning demanding arrest of the killers.  
The processionists attacked some Shibir activists on the way.  
See Page 12 Col 6

## N-tests: Talbot to hold 'critical meetings' with Indo, Pak envoys

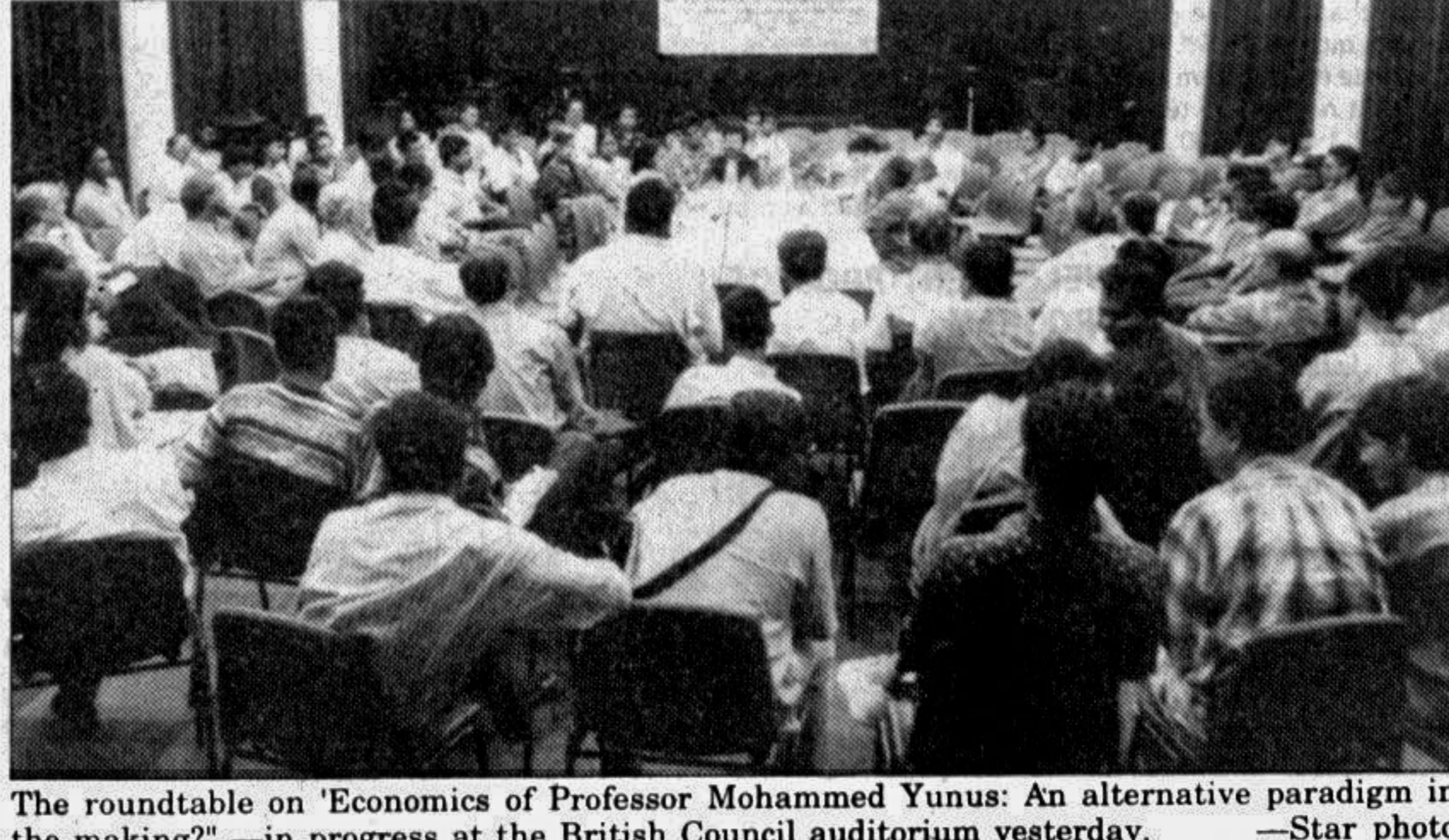
WASHINGTON, Aug 22: US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbot will meet Indian and Pakistani envoys next week for what the State Department called 'critical meetings' on the two countries' recent nuclear tests, reports Reuters.  
Department spokesman James Foley said Talbot would meet Indian special envoy Jaswant Singh in Washington on Monday and Pakistani Foreign Secretary Shamsheer Ahmed in London on Tuesday.  
"These are critical meetings," Foley told a news briefing. He said Washington hoped that the two rivals would be prepared to make forward steps in the direction of the international community's agenda for defusing the situation caused by the nuclear explosions in South Asia.  
First India and then Pakistan staged nuclear tests in May and June respectively.  
See Page 12 Col 6

## Voters' ID card by June '99: CEC

Chief Election Commission (CEC) Mohammad Abu Hena yesterday said the commission has taken all necessary measures for handing over corrected voters identity card to every citizen of the country by June '99, reports BSS.  
He was reviewing the progress of correction of the voters list of Jessore district at Jessore Circuit House.  
Presided over by the Deputy Commissioner and Chief Coordinator of voters list correction committee, the meeting was attended by district election officer, all thana nirbahi officers and thana election officers.  
The Chief Election Commissioner said eligible and new voters would have to be included in the revised voters' list by dropping names of those who are dead or have changed address.  
He urged the voter registration officers for giving importance to proper scrutiny of application forms. He said steps had been taken for multiple use of voters' ID card to increase its importance.  
See Page 12 Col 6

## Terrorist Nasir shifted to Comilla jail

From Staff Correspondent  
CHITTAGONG, Aug 22: The Islamist Chhatra Shibir backed terrorist Nasir, arrested by police in a raid few months ago, was shifted to Comilla central jail from Chittagong jail, jail officials said.  
They said that Nasir was shifted to Comilla central jail under a strong police escort five days ago due to security reasons.  
See Page 12 Col 6



The roundtable on 'Economics of Professor Mohammed Yunus: An alternative paradigm in the making?' —in progress at the British Council auditorium yesterday. —Star photo