

The Daily Star

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VINEGAR
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WATER

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Each thana hqs to have one flood shelter

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said a flood shelter would be constructed in the country's each thana headquarters, reports UNB.

She also referred to the government's special plan to construct the office buildings above flood level so that people could get shelter during any worst flood like this year.

The Prime Minister spelt out various post-flood rehabilitation plans when a delegation of ADAB (Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh) called on her at her office in the afternoon.

Hasina said homeless people would be provided with shelter under the government's various housing projects like Ashrayan and model village, and small loans will be given to the low-income groups.

About the post-flood agriculture loan, she said Tk 3,270 crore would be disbursed to recoup the losses in this sector badly hit by this year's flooding.

The Prime Minister said steps have been taken to check any irregularity or corruption in disbursing the agri-loans.

She urged the NGOs to mobilise the resources.

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Bangabandhu Murder Case Judgement likely in second week of next month

By Staff Correspondent

The judgement in the Bangabandhu Murder Case is likely to be delivered in the second week of next month, sources said.

Trial of the case began in the District and Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka, on April 8, with 'indictment' of 20 people accused in the case.

One of the accused was, however, discharged from the case by the High Court later.

The prosecution is likely to complete its reply to arguments of the defence on points of law by tomorrow, prosecution lawyer Anisul Haq told this correspondent yesterday.

"The Judge may take another two to three weeks to prepare the judgement after the prosecution completes its arguments," said Haq, who is one of the six special public prosecutors in the case.

Meanwhile, officials of the law ministry said that the Judge, Kazi Golam Rasul, is due to go on LPR on December 1.

"The judgement is expected to be delivered before the judge goes on LPR," one official said without specifying the date.

During the proceedings of the case over the last one year and a half, 61 of the 74 witnesses were examined.

The Bangabandhu Murder Case was lodged with the Dhannondi thana on October 2, 1996 by Mahitul Islam, a resident personal assistant of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The case was filed when Awami League return to power after 21 years.

The CID investigated the Bangabandhu Murder Case for about three and a half months and submitted the charge sheet accusing 24 people for murdering Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family members on August 15, 1975.

Among the accused, four were not sent up for trial as they were dead. They were: Khondaker Mushtaque Ahmed, Mahbub Alam Ghashi, Capt. Mustafa and Risalder Sarwar.

Of the remaining 20 accused, one was discharged by the High Court, five are detained in the Dhaka Central Jail, one is in jail in Thailand waiting extradition.

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Cauliflower, a winter vegetable, has already started arriving in city markets. — Star photo

Shantu Larma to visit Bandarban today to 'explain his position'

BANDARBAN, Oct 12: Shantu Larma, former chief of the disbanded Shantabahini, will pay a 10-day visit to the hill district starting tomorrow to explain his position on the CHT Regional Council, reports APB.

Meanwhile, CHT Affairs Minister Kalparanjana Chakma is scheduled to embark on a week-long tour of Bandarban from Thursday.

It will be Larma's first trip to Bandarban since the signing of CHT peace treaty on December 2 last year. Earlier, he visited the two other hill districts — Rangamati and Khagrachhari.

A highly placed source in the PCJSS told APB that Shantu Larma could make an important announcement during his Bandarban visit regarding the standoff with the government on the formation of Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council.

Larma refrained from assuming the office of Chairman.

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DCs asked to start FFW programme immediately

By Reaz Ahmed

The relief ministry Sunday asked all deputy commissioners to immediately start Food For Work (FFW) programme in the flood affected areas.

The ministry has already allocated 1,20,000 tonnes of wheat under the programme and an equal quantity will be allocated next month, relief secretary Azad Ruhul Amin told The Daily Star.

Some three lakh tonnes more foodgrain would be allocated under FFW programmes to be undertaken by the ministries of water resources and local government and rural development, he said.

"If schemes under FFW are taken immediately, jobless people in flood-hit areas would get wheat in exchange of labour for infrastructure development. This would enhance peoples' buying capacity," the relief secretary said.

In addition to the foodgrain under FFW programme, the government has already sanctioned 50,000 tonnes of wheat for work under Test Relief (TR). An equal quantity of wheat would be allotted for TR in November, he said.

When asked if the quantity of wheat will be enough for reviving the shattered rural economy against the backdrop of the loss of Aman crop, another official said, the relief ministry has asked for another 3.75 lakh tonnes of foodgrain to expand TR and FFW programmes.

"Our proposal is under consideration of the finance ministry and as the food aid flow suggests, we're hopeful of getting more and more wheat for these programmes," the official said.

Meanwhile, distribution of 40 lakh VGF cards in all the flood affected unions could not be completed yesterday, according to reports received from districts.

See Page 12 Col 6

Three Americans share Nobel Medicine Prize

STOCKHOLM, Oct 12: Three Americans won Nobel Prize today for discovering that nitric oxide acts as a signal for the cardiovascular system, a role that's key to the anti-impotence drug Viagra, reports AP.

The finding also has other applications ranging from treating heart disease to shock.

The Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine went to Robert F Furchgott, Louis J Ignarro and Ferid Murad. Furchgott, 82, is a pharmacologist at the State University of New York in Brooklyn. Ignarro, 57, is at University of California-Los Angeles and Murad, 62, is at the University of Texas Medical School in Houston.

The 978,000 dollars prize is divided equally among the three winners.

The researchers discovered that nitric oxide tells blood vessels to relax and widen, an effect that helps control blood pressure.

Nitric oxide, a colourless gas, makes blood vessels dilate by relaxing the vessels' smooth muscles. It can trigger erection of the penis the same way, he said.

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Jamaat won't participate in Oct 18 'mass hunger strike'

By Nazmul Ashraf

Jamaat-e-Islami has decided not to participate in the October 18 'mass hunger strike' planned by the BNP-led seven-party alliance of which Jamaat is a component.

Instead, the party will hold a public rally in the city on the day.

Confirming this, Quamruz-zaman, Jamaat representative in the liaison committee of the alliance, said his party differed on the planned anti-government agitation.

"We never observed such a programme in the past. It's opposed to our tradition of movement.... We also raised the issue in the seven-party meeting where the mass hunger strike was decided," the Jamaat leader told The Daily Star last night.

The alliance at its meeting on Saturday decided to observe the hunger strike to protest 'corruption and fascism' by the Awami League government. The nine-hour fasting is due to start at 9 am at the city's Paltan Maidan.

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Finance Minister tells press WB, IMF to provide \$330m for BOP

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have agreed to provide loans amounting to about 330 million US dollar to support Bangladesh's balance of payment, reports UNB.

However, the final decision would be taken later this month at the board meetings of the two organisations, Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria said while addressing a press conference at the finance ministry yesterday afternoon on the outcome of his recent talks in Washington with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

He said although the impact would be identical, the IMF is providing the money for balance of payment support while the World Bank for essential commodity import support.

IMF will provide 130 million dollar and the World Bank 200 million dollar, Kibria said adding agreements to this effect are likely to be signed by this month.

However, he admitted, both the international financial institutions have put conditions for expediting reforms and macro-economic affairs.

Replying to a question, the finance minister said he would speak on those conditions later.

Explaining the rationale of seeking the loan from the IMF and World Bank, he said the loans would be utilised to keep the 'Economy stable in future as it has been kept even after a deluge.'

Kibria said: 'We've nine more months to go in the current fiscal and we might need additional foreign exchange in the coming months to face any emergency need.'

"All these steps are to keep the economy stable and facilitate it to grow."

Responding to another query, he said the money has been sought so that the country's foreign currency reserve is not put under pressure.

"As the country will have to see Page 12 Col 2

48-hr barricade programme ends in Khagrachhari

From Our Correspondent

KHAGRACHHARI, Oct 12: A 48-hour road barricade programme, called by the Sarobdoliyo Oikyo Parishad ended here today.

There was no report of any untoward incident.

The Parishad enforced the programme demanding reforms of opposition leaders and workers arrested in connection with the Rangaraj incident.

Police arrested 18 people, including Rangaraj UP Chairman, on October 7.

There was no movement of vehicles to and from the district town during the programme.

UNB adds: The barricade programme forced a PCJSS delegation, led by its president Shantu Larma, to postpone its planned visit to Bandarban district today. The delegation is expected to visit the district tomorrow.

PM calls on President

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called on President Shahabuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday evening, reports UNB.

The Prime Minister apprised President of the government's various programmes to rehabilitate the flood victims across the country.

She briefed him about colossal damage to standing crops, industrial installations and communication network by the unprecedented floods.

Hasina mentioned the government's initiative to import foodgrains and arrange international food aid. She said positive response was received from the world community for the flood victims.

The Prime Minister said Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) programme would continue till the new harvest. She said the government with active cooperation from local people has been working relentlessly for rehabilitating the affected people.

President Shahabuddin appreciated the efforts of the government and people in tackling the devastating flood with courage and fortitude.

He said that gigantic task of post-flood rehabilitation should also be taken with a missionary zeal.

A flood-hit village in Munshiganj gets only 14 VGF cards

By Rafiq Hasan back from Munshiganj

Ruma and Hazera of south Ramgopalpur in Munshiganj district were pleading to an influential person of the village to include their names in the list prepared for distribution of Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) cards.

They said they had got VGF cards in the past but this time their names were not included in the list as they were not at home when the VGF committee members visited the village on Monday before last.

The influential person, Jasim Uddin Ahmed, a former union parishad chairman and member of the local VGF committee, said only 14 VGF cards have been allocated for Ramgopalpur village for the month of October.

Many villagers like Ruma and Hazera are now knocking at the doors of UP chairmen, members and government officials for post-flood relief. They said they have survived the flood on relief given by the government and different socio-political organisations. But they need further help because it will take more time to regain their earlier sources of income.

"I am in extreme hardship with a nine-member family as my husband is too old to work," Hazera said.

Ruma said her husband is unable to do hard work because he had met with an accident a few months back. Her rickshawpuller husband Matin has serious problem with one of his legs since the accident. So he opened a small shop in the village but that has been destroyed by the recent flood," she said.

Referring to a group of people including Ruma and Hazera who gathered in front of his shop at Rikabi Bazar, Jasim said they are not included in the list because this time relief would be given only to those people with no source of income.

"Destitute people, particularly the handicapped, widows and divorcees were given priority while making the list for VGF cards. It was prepared by a committee comprising leading people of the village and union parishad members," he added.

Munshiganj district relief and rehabilitation officer Mohammad Mostafa Uddin said 825 tonnes of wheat and rice were distributed against 25,800 VGF cards in the district during August and September.

"For the month of October, 73,100 cards will be distributed, and 1,169 tonnes of rice and wheat will be distributed against those. The relief distribution under the scheme for this month is yet to be started," Mostafa said.

According to the relief officer, as many as 8,861 families with 44,204 members had taken shelter in 134 flood shelters in the district. Most of the schools.

See Page 12 Col 1

Tofail says Ershad came to Dhaka without permission in Aug '75

Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed yesterday criticised former president H M Ershad for suppressing facts regarding his role before and after the tragic incidents of 1975.

"He is a liar and suppressed the facts," he told UNB questioning the veracity of Ershad's claim that he had not been in Dhaka between August 15 and November 3, 1975.

Ershad had told some journalists on Sunday that he was in Delhi on training at the National Defence College and did not come to Dhaka during that time.

Tofail who earlier called Ershad a beneficiary of the killing said he had been in Dhaka during August and had a secret meeting with the self-confessed killers at Bangabhaban.

The Commerce Minister said Ershad came to Dhaka on August 27 or 28 from Delhi without permission.

See Page 12 Col 4

Mintoo's election manifesto 101-pt plan to strengthen private sector

Abdul Awal Mintoo, the presidential hopeful in the forthcoming FBCCI elections, yesterday announced a 101-point plan of action for strengthening the private sector, reports APB.

He said, if elected, he will try to implement his plans to remove the hurdles industries and commerce have been facing through discussion with the government and agencies concerned.

At a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday afternoon, he set forth his election manifesto. Expansion and transformation of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry to deliver the goods most needed for the country's economic health top the agenda.

He will seek government assistance in establishing a federation building on its own land.

The FBCCI elections, which take place every two years, is scheduled for October 15. Mintoo's rival in the hustings is M A Rouf Chowdhury.

Replying to a question, he, however, said if he won, his first job would be to assess the damage in the industrial sector due to the floods and negotiate with the government for its rehabilitation.

The manifesto includes: national growth and industrialisation, increase of export, infrastructure development, prevention of the erosion of social values, environmental development and dealing with VAT and taxes, and law-and-order situation.

Asked about his role regarding loan defaulters, Mintoo said: "It is none of the business of the FBCCI. It is the business of the Bangladesh Bank to see who is a defaulter, who is not," he said, adding, "I'll see now who is a voter for the election."

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Tornado hits N'ganj: 30 hurt

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, October 12: At least 30 people were injured and more than 50 houses badly damaged by a four-minute tornado which blew over village Palla under Ararhaz thana in the district at around 2:15 pm Sunday.

The tornado also damaged crops, and uprooted trees, according to a message received here today.

Deputy Commissioner of Narayanganj Abdur Rahman Bhuiyan visited the affected area this evening to assess the damage. When contacted, officials at the DC's office said the damage may be worth Tk five lakh.

Karim (25), Rahman Ali (27), Jabbar (50), Hasmat Ali (60), Jasim (45), Emajuddin (36), Mansoor Ali (45) and Fazul Haq (27) are among the seriously injured, the officials said.

AL leader slaughtered at Pabna

PABNA, Oct 12: A local Awami League leader was slaughtered allegedly by a gang of outlawed Sarbaha Party men in Sadar thana last night, reports APB.

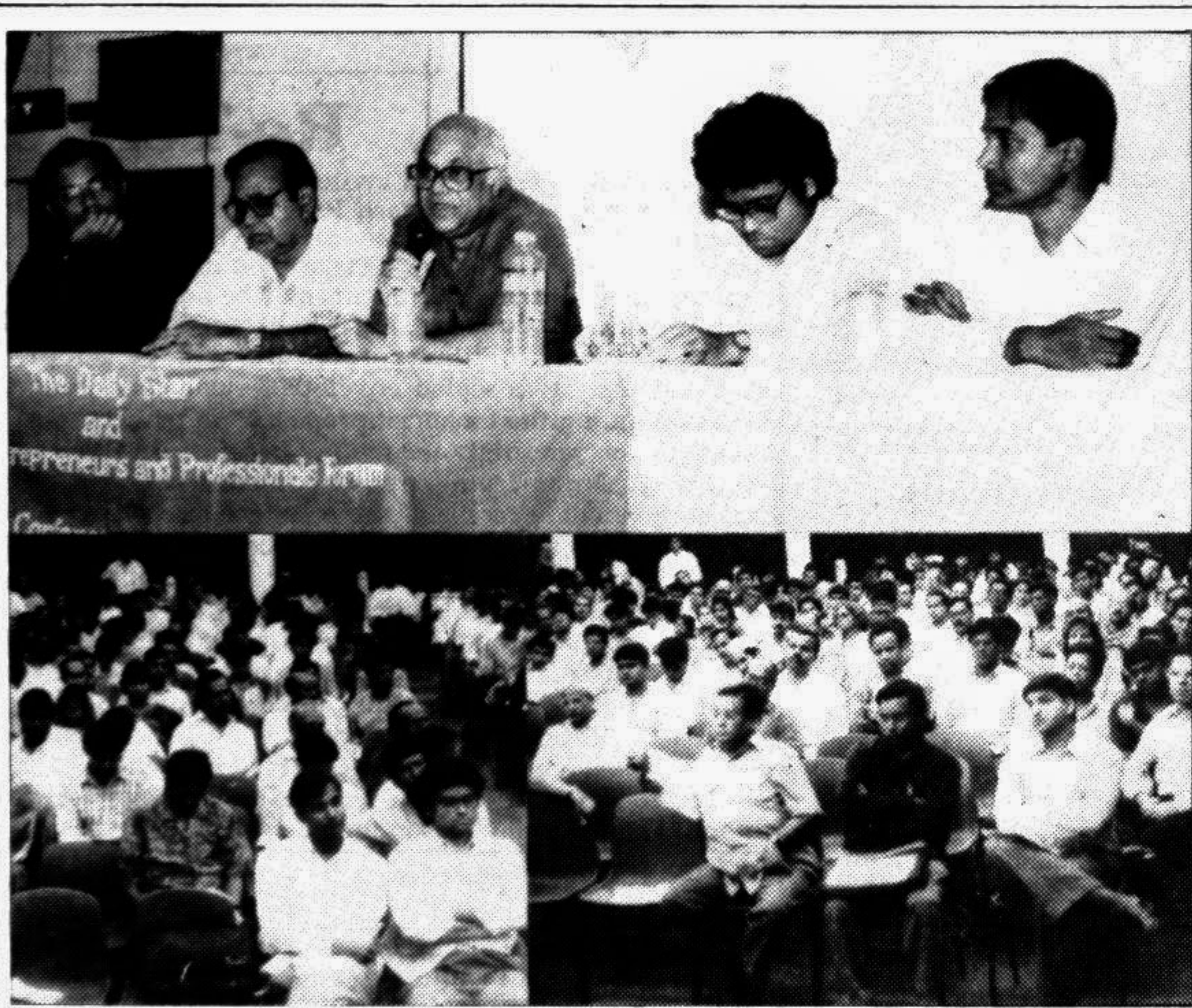
The victim was identified as Abdul Bari, 32, son of Ajhar Ali of village Manoharpur in the thana. He was the vice-president of Geyshpur union unit of Awami League.

Police said, a gang of about 12 people picked Bari at gun point at Manoharpur at about 10 pm while he was returning home from the town. They abandoned his body in a jute field after killing him.

The district Awami League president Wazuddin Khan, MP, and general secretary Rezaur Rahim Lal condemned the killing and demanded immediate punishment of the culprits.

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(Top) Speakers at the conference on Reviving Our City: (from left) Dr K M Maniruzzaman, Brig (Retd) A H M Abdul Momen, Shaukat Ali Khan, Dr Sabbir Ahmed and A T M Asaduzzaman. (Bottom) A partial view of the audience. — Star photo

Young Entrepreneurs' Conference Halt unplanned urbanisation

By Staff Correspondent

Different professionals involved in city development activities have called for a change in urban planning and development.

Participating in a conference on 'Reviving Our City' organised by the Young Entrepreneurs and Professional Forum and initiated by The Daily Star in association with the British Council in the city yesterday, architects, geologists, developers and town planners said that with the present trend of urbanisation, the Dhaka city would soon become unliveable.

They said, a multi-disciplinary coordination is needed for planning and developing the city.

A T M Asaduzzaman, Senior Geologist, Geological Survey of Bangladesh, in his deliberation alleged that during the recent observance of Habitat Day, geologists were not involved although they played one of the most vital roles in city development.

Asaduzzaman said, the city is built on the earth's surface but it is vital to know what is happening in the sub-surface.

"A geologist would be able to tell you whether the soil is good enough for the construction," he said.

Brig (ret'd) A H M Abdul Momen, President, Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB) said, a defined zoning system should be developed to control the unplanned urbanisation. He said future housing plots should be not less than ten kathas of land. "We tend to construct building on the entire piece of land without leaving any space. But nowadays buyers are more aware of environment and healthy living so we find it hard to sell apartments without proper facilities," the REHAB President said.

Dr K M Maniruzzaman, Assistant Professor, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, BUET, emphasised regional planning to reduce pressure on the city. He said, we have created water logging by filling up the city canals and low lying areas. The towns of Savar, Gazipur, Narayanganj and others are now growing centering around Dhaka. "There is still time to save the low lying areas in those towns and plan properly," he said adding that people's participation and sharing of information were necessary for proper planning.

Shaikat Ali Khan, Chief Town Planner, Rajuk, said the Dhaka Master Plan was introduced through extensive people's participation. The Master Plan keeps provision for environment, health, traffic and many other aspects of a well planned city. Now its proper implementation is required for the city to grow properly.

Most essentials still dear

Star Report

Prices of some essentials have increased and those of some others decreased in the city markets. Early varieties of winter vegetables have started arriving in the markets but their prices are too high.

Price of some fine and coarse varieties of rice declined slightly. One kg of nazirshail

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Microbus driver saves school girl from kidnappers

MYMENSINGH, Oct 12: A microbus driver saved a schoolgirl from being kidnapped in Muktagachha thana today, reports UNB.

Police said four youths picked up the girl from her school gate at 9 am in a bid to take her to Nakla thana of Sherpur district.

But the driver of the microbus, which was rented by the abductors, made his way into the Muktagachha police station sensing their intention.

Police caught one of the kidnappers as they tried to flee the scene. The driver filed a case with Muktagachha thana.

Three women, including a medical college student, were kidnapped last week from the thana, police said.