



# The Daily Star



## Ties with Dhaka to benefit Calcutta: Basu

CALCUTTA, Jan 27: The West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu has sought friendship with all countries in the region, reports UNB.

"We have no problem with Bangladesh. We also don't think people of Pakistan are our enemy," he said adding India wants friendship with Bangladesh and all its neighbours.

Basu was speaking at the inauguration ceremony of the Calcutta Book Fair '99 today. "I don't want to mention the problems of Pakistan government here. But people of a country are not responsible for activities of a government," he said without elaborating.

The West Bengal chief minister, who played a key role in the signing of historic Indo-Bangla water sharing treaty, said his province would benefit from growing friendly relations with Bangladesh.

Apart from book fair, Bangladesh is taking part in trade fairs, he said adding even Pakistani entrepreneurs are coming to participate in the trade fairs. "It is a very good sign."

Basu, who is also popular among the people of Bangladesh, regretted that thousands

## Bus services agreed

CALCUTTA, Jan 27: India and Bangladesh today agreed in principle to run bus services between the two countries, and cooperate in areas of common concern, including energy, trade and transport, reports BSS.

The Foreign Ministers level meeting would be held some time in March to further discuss these issues, Indian External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh who had a 45-minute meeting with visiting Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her hotel suite, told newsmen.

Sheikh Hasina had suggested that their discussion must be followed up by prompt action and the foreign ministers of the two countries should meet, Singh said.

Singh who arrived here by a special Indian airforce flight from Delhi to welcome the Bangladesh Prime Minister on behalf of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, said that the issues of common concern, es-

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## Fair opens Books bring souls together, says Hasina

CALCUTTA, Jan 27: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today said Bangladesh, being the only language-based country in South Asia, is the natural centre for Bengali language to flourish, reports UNB.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of the Calcutta Book Fair '99 as chief guest, Hasina said: "Bangla is our mother tongue. We Bengalis sacrificed a lot to protect our mother tongue. Many had to lay down their lives to save the language in the past."

"We are the only people who played a rare role of sacrificing lives to protect the prestige of the language."

Expressing gratitude for selecting Bangladesh as the "local theme" of the book fair, the prime minister said books establish a cultural bridge between the past and the present.

"Books establish bonds of

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Non-traditional export item growers to get govt credit

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### Prayer Timings

January 28		
Azan	Jamaat	
Fajr 5-22	5-26	
Zohr 12-45	1-15	
Asr 4-00	4-15	
Maghrib 5-42	5-45	
Esha 7-10	7-20	

Source: Islamic Foundation

## Hasina tells civic reception in Calcutta

# Stronger ties a must to fight common problems

CALCUTTA, Jan 27: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina sought greater bilateral cooperation with India by removing all obstacles, distrust and doubts between the two next-door neighbours for the common good, reports UNB.

"We'll have to expand our co-operation on the basis of cordiality, brotherhood and harmony... I'm optimistic about the future of our two countries and I also foresee a very bright prospect for improving our bilateral relations," she told her Calcutta audience today.

The Prime Minister, who flew in here this afternoon on a three-day visit, was speaking at a civic reception hosted by Calcutta Mayor Prashanta Chatterjee at Town Hall. Later she attended a banquet hosted by West Bengal Governor Dr AR Kidwai at Raj Bhavan.

Hasina said both Bangladesh and India have common problems like hunger, poverty and illiteracy with

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addresses as chief guest the opening ceremony of the Calcutta Book Fair '99 in the West Bengal capital yesterday. —PID photo

## 2 foreign nationals are 'key organisers'

# 25000 trained at Lalkhan 'camp' alone in 14 years

By Staff Correspondent

Harkat-Uz-Jihad trained at least 25 thousand young men in the last 14 years at its Lalkhan Bazar "training camp" in Chittagong, officials of the Joint Investigating Cell (JIC) told this correspondent yesterday.

The training was given in three stages. In the first stage, the trainees learnt how to use 'big lathis'. In the second stage they learnt "commando warfare" and in the final stage they learnt "use of firearms", police claimed. One training batch comprised 75 young men.

Most recently, 37 teachers were engaged to train 260 students, police claimed.

Besides, investigators have also revealed that Ahmed Sadik Ahmed, an Indian-born South African, confessed to the JIC that he was a close associate and a personal friend of Osama Bin Laden, a Saudi multimillionaire, now living in Afghanistan, who is known to finance "terrorist" organisations globally.

JIC officials claimed that Ahmed Sadik Ahmed was a diamond trader and used to "donate" Tk. one crore annually to the Harkat-Uz-Jihad.

Investigators also claimed that they have "found the key

man" of Harkat-Uz-Jihad in Bangladesh and "unearthed" the organisation involved in the plot to kill poet Shamsur Rahman.

Eighteen persons who have so far been arrested for their alleged involvement in the plot are now being interrogated by the JIC.

Police officials however said that the arrested Pakistani national, Sajeed, was "in-charge" of Harkat-Uz-Jihad in Bangladesh, Pakistan and India.

## Now Islami Liberation Tiger of Bangladesh?

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Jan 27: Patuakhali police unearthed a den of an armed Islamic terrorist group — "Islami Liberation Tiger of Bangladesh" — in village Kalaraj under Galachipa thana of Patuakhali district.

Police were visiting the area to investigate a rape case.

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Sajeed was engaged to ensure providing funds to the organisations in the countries he was in charge of, police said.

Maulana Nazrul Islam, acted as the "Ameer" of Harkat-Uz-Jihad in Bangladesh. A "certificate" recovered from Nazrul's possession was issued by Taher Jihad, a "parent organisation" of Harkat-Uz-Jihad, based in Pakistan. "The certificate proves his appointment as Ameer in Bangladesh", police officials further claimed.

Nazrul was the organiser in Bangladesh while Bakhtiar, who was arrested from a madrasah in the city's Uttara area, "distributed funds to the 421 units of Harkat-Uz-Jihad in Bangladesh", they claimed.

Under the leadership of Bakhtiar, Harkat-Uz-Jihad was divided into 421 units for conducting their activities. The chief of a unit is called Principal or Imam. "Every unit chief was given Tk. 2000 monthly for their activities", JIC claimed.

Police officials claimed that their investigation revealed existence of only one "training camp" of Harkat-Uz-Jihad in Bangladesh, which is located at Lalkhan Bazar on about 21

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## Boat capsizes: 11 drown in Banskhali

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 27: At least 11 people drowned and 15 others were missing when a passenger boat capsized in Jalkader canal under Banskhali thana in the southern Chittagong, this evening, police and other sources said.

Police said bodies of 11 persons were recovered from the canal at Godamara near the Bay of Bengal.

Rescuers were looking for the missing persons, sources said.

Unconfirmed sources said that the death toll in the boat capsizing might go up.

The accident took place at around 8 pm when an engine boat with more than 30 people aboard entered the Jalkader canal from the sea, police said.

The passengers were going to Kutubdia from Banskhali.

However, the other passengers swam ashore.

Hundreds of villagers rushed to the spot and joined the rescue operation, police sources said.

## Hartal passes off peacefully in Chittagong

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 27: The hartal, extended in the port city till 2 pm today by the opposition alliance here, passed off almost peacefully.

The alliance comprising BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami and Jatiya Party had extended the hartal yesterday protesting what it called police action on its activists while they tried to enter the court premises during a nationwide hartal. At least 25 people were injured in the clash between police and opposition activists.

However, during today's hartal here, no untoward incident was reported, police said.

Opposition activists also held rallies and processions in the city during the hartal.

Most of vehicles excepting a

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## Alleged Arakanese Taleban held

COX'S BAZAR, Jan 27: Police arrested an alleged Arakanese Taleban member from Garjan area in Ramu thana this morning, reports APB.

He was identified as Abdul Amin, 28, of village Bolibazar under Mongdu thana in Arakan of Myanmar. Police arrested him from a barber's shop in the bazar.

Amin told police that he had trespassed into Bangladesh about a decade ago and became a member of Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO), an Arakanese revolutionary group.

He was living at Kholachi under Dochari in Naikhangch-

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# Opposition effort to talk partymen out of polls race

By Rezaul Karim

Opposition parties are taking a number of steps to persuade their own men, who have submitted nomination papers for ensuring municipal polls, to withdraw before the last date for it.

According to sources, some 80 leaders of opposition BNP, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh submitted nomination papers for municipal chairman. A total of 40 of them are from BNP, 36 from JP and four from Jamaat.

BNP sources, however, claimed that 11 bona fide leaders had submitted nominations for chairman while dozens others for ward commissioner.

They also claimed the chairman candidate at Netrokona had already written to the authorities to withdraw while the one at Munshiganj had been missing.

Replying to a question, a senior BNP leader said many people who had submitted nomi-

nation papers in absence of BNP men were claiming themselves as BNP candidates but "we only found 11 partymen."

The BNP leader said steps have been taken to persuade the party leaders to withdraw immediately. "We are still inquiring into how many BNP men submitted nominations. Our district committees have been instructed to inform the party secretary general about party candidates," he said.

Another competent source said the BNP secretary general would send letters to district committees today asking them to talk to the party leaders and activists who have submitted nominations.

If the party candidates fail to respond, the district committees will be instructed to serve show-cause notices on them.

"There will be no alternative but to expel the candidates from the party if they refuse to with-

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## Corruption in medical purchases

# Another Tk 20 cr swallowed

By Naimul Haq

In its second such finding, the parliamentary committee on health has found massive corruption in procurement of medical and surgical equipment (MSR) by seven civil surgeons (CS) who are alleged to have misappropriated at least Tk 20 crore.

The CSs were in charge of procuring medical accessories and furniture and fittings for hospitals.

A three-member sub-committee headed by Tajul Islam Choudhury MP detected the irregularities. The committee found that civil surgeons of Pirojpur, Patuakhali, Barisal, Bagerhat, Jessore, Sherpur and officials of Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) misappropriated the money over a period of five years.

"The investigation shows there were cases of gross misappropriation," said a Standing Committee source, giving details of a number of instances.

For example, in Pirojpur, the contractor who supplied the goods showed price of a two-inch ordinary leucoplast (bandage) Tk 534. Its retail market price is Tk 80.

In Barisal, cost of a compressor of an ordinary freezer was shown at Tk 17,000 instead

of its market retail price (MRP) of Tk 5,000.

Tube lights were bought at Tk 650 apiece whereas its maximum retail price was Tk 100.

A 25-watt Tk 18-taka bulb was bought for Tk 650, while 100-watt bulbs were shown to have been purchased at Tk 1,400 each.

The Barisal civil surgeon also stocked huge quantity of injection that can be used for at least another 30 years, according to the committee.

In Bagerhat, a voucher for Tk 7,000 was produced for a Tk 450 tuning fork. A Tk 5,000 weighing machine was shown to cost Tk 3,500. A Tk 8,000 ophthalmology (eye investigation device) was bought for Tk 29,000, a Tk 80 bottle antimicrobial spray (Mortein) was

procured for Tk 1,650 while Tk 5,000 steel racks were purchased at Tk 29,000 each.

In Jessore, a Tk 5,000 centrifugal machine was bought for Tk 27,000, a Tk 7,000 incubator for Tk 30,000. A Tk 6,000 stabilizer was priced at Tk 16,500, a Tk 150 ECG paper roll at Tk 600 and an ordinary Tk 700 table lamp at Tk 6,400.

In Sherpur, the civil surgeon purchased three lakh dispos-

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## Municipal polls

9511 candidates: 252 nominations cancelled so far

By Staff Correspondent

A total of 9,511 candidates have filed nomination papers for contesting the elections in 140 municipalities. Election Commission sources said last night.

The elections will be held on 23-25 February.

According to Election Commission sources, 682 persons submitted nomination papers for 140 posts of chairmen, 6,965 for 1333 posts of commissioners and 1864 for 441 reserved seats for female commissioners.

Scrutiny of the nomination papers across the country began at 10:00 am yesterday. Till 9:30 pm, the EC Secretariat received scrutiny reports from 123 municipalities.

According to latest information from the EC, 252 nomination papers have so far been cancelled during scrutiny. The cancelled nomination papers include 18 for the posts of chairmen, 188 for commissioners and 46 for the posts of female commissioners.

## Khaleda talks to diplomats

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia last night held a discussion with some diplomats in the city and apprised them of the latest development in politics, particularly the ensuing municipal polls.

A close aide of Khaleda Zia told The Daily Star over telephone that the talks took place at a Gulshan residence of a party leader where some eight to ten top diplomats attended. He added the function was organised to host a dinner in honour of outgoing chief of Eu-

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## DMP refutes photo caption

Dhaka Metropolitan Police

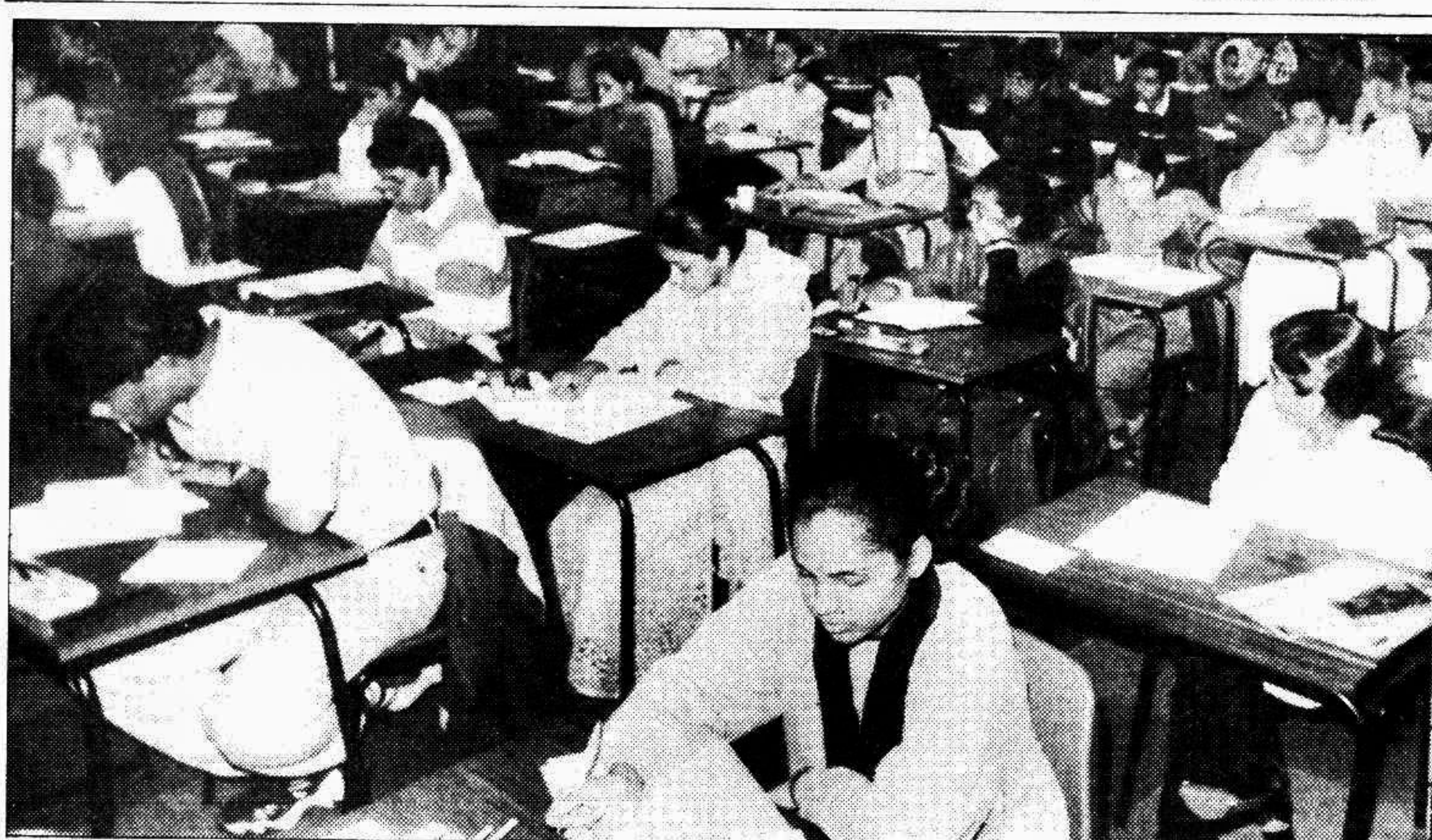
yesterday sent a letter protesting the caption of a photograph printed in yesterday's Daily Star.

The DMP letter said, "The caption of the picture reads that the man snatched the gun from a policeman on duty which is not correct. Policemen on duty there did not come across such occurrence."

"So Dhaka Metropolitan Police strongly protest against this news."

**Our reply:** The picture vividly shows a man carrying a shot-gun. In our caption we asked if the man was arrested and the gun recovered. Further we like to ask how much legal it was to wield a gun during hartal. Police was posted only few yards away.

The DMP letter failed to reply to our queries.



## The future at stake

Thanks to total disregard by the political parties, O' Level students in Bangladesh had to appear at the examinations well after midnight Tuesday night (or early Wednesday morning) at the British Council, the usual Dhaka venue. One batch of students sat at 1:30am and another at 4:00am. Many of them, depending on their combination of courses, had a third round later in the day. Worse, the young students were taken to their nerves' edge by the mindless politicians who kept all guessing whether Monday's 18-hour hartal would be extended. Worse still, according to sources, Bangladesh students now run the risk of losing the chance of sitting at local examination centres as the hartal-caused dislocation occurred for the second time.

—Star photo by Sk Enamul Haq

# Return of the rapists at JU

By JU Correspondent

Despite strong protest by the students of Jahangirnagar University (JU), three students who were found guilty of raping and abetting the act sat for examinations outside the campus yesterday under a special arrangement by the university authorities.

One of them, Roni of BCL, belonging to the Department of Government and Politics, was found guilty of rape by the JU

Fact Finding Committee and was later suspended by the JU Syndicate.

Roni and his abettors Ferdous and Rafiq of the same department sat for their MSS examination under the "special arrangements" at a "sub-centre" at Savar Thana Health Complex yesterday.

Agitated students rushed to the Vice Chancellor's residence yesterday morning after news

that the three examinees were staying there. They demanded a statement from the VC who was at the residence at that time.

As VC Prof Alauddin Ahmed refused to meet them, the students rushed to the examination office and tried to prevent the examination officials from taking their examinations. The students alleged that the authorities "illegally favoured the

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## JCD central leader Shishir arrested

By DU Correspondent

Detective police arrested a central leader of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student wing of opposition BNP, from the city's Hatirpool crossing yesterday.

He was identified as Harunur-Rasheed Shishir known as 'Dog Shishir'. He is a member of JCD Central Committee.

Shishir is accused in the

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## অগ্রণী ব্যাংকের কৃষি ঋণ কর্মসূচী

অগ্রণী ব্যাংকের কৃষি ঋণ কর্মসূচীর আওতায় শস্যঋণ সহ দারিদ্র বিমোচন মূলক ঋণদান কর্মসূচী অব্যাহত রয়েছে। বর্তমানে অগ্রণী ব্যাংকের ৬১৫টি শাখার মাধ্যমে শস্য উৎপাদন, হাঁস মুরগী পালন, দ্রুত খামার, গরু মোটাজাকারন, পুকুরে মৎস্য চাষ, কৃষি যন্ত্রপাতি ক্রয় ও দারিদ্র বিমোচনমূলক আয় উৎসারী অন্যান্য কর্মকাণ্ডে ঋণ প্রদান করা হচ্ছে।



খামার টাকা সঠিকভাবে ব্যবহার করুন  
সময়মত ঋণ পরিশোধ করুন এবং  
২% সুদ রেয়াতের সুবিধা গ্রহন করুন  
পুনরায় ঋণ গ্রহণের সুযোগ নিন

ঋণ গ্রহণে অগ্রণী ব্যাংকবর্গকে অগ্রণী ব্যাংকের নিকটস্থ  
শাখায় যোগাযোগ করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।



অগ্রণী ব্যাংক

দেশ ও জাতির সেবায় প্রতিশ্রুতিবদ্ধ