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First day of book fair

By DU Correspondent

A large number of people crowded the Bangla Academy premises on the first day of the Amr Ekushey Boi Mela (book fair) yesterday.

Hundreds of book enthusiasts, mostly youths, flocked to the Academy premises to have a first-hand feel of the month-long fair, going to almost all the stalls and asking about the new books. Some of them even returned home with new books.

The main attraction of this year's fair is the big digital screen set up in front of the information centre to keep the visitors informed about different events. People gathered in front of the big screen to watch displays on it.

"It's very interesting to see such new things at the book fair," a visitor said. One can also know about the location of a book stall on the screen.

This year, the stalls have been restricted to the Bangla Academy premises. The authorities have taken up some special measures to hold the fair with due solemnity.

Some unruly elements in the past, taking advantage of the liberal attitude of the authorities, had tried to undermine the spirit of the book fair which is associated with Language Movement of 1952.

The daily programme of the fair will begin today with a painting competition for children at 9 in the morning. A musical programme will also be held in the evening today.

Khulna AL's bid to resolve intra-party rivalry

From Staff Correspondent
KHULNA, Feb 5: Unprecedented security measures were taken to avert any clash between two rival groups of Awami League during the extended meeting of the district and city committees held today at the party office.

The meeting was attended, among others, by the state minister for Disaster Management, Talukdar Abdul Khaleque, Whip Mostafa Rashid, Shuja and Sheikh Helaluddin, MP, to discuss several issues, including murders of the party leaders and activists in the city due to intra-party rivalry during last one year.

Two platoons of riot police were deployed around city Awami League office where

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Prayer Timings

February 6

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5:24	5:28
Zohr	12:45	1:15
Asr	4:10	4:20
Maghrib	5:55	5:58
Esha	7:10	7:20

Source: Islamic Foundation

The Daily Star

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Experts' team due in city today

US may help work out gas dev strategies

By Sharier Khan

A 14-member US energy delegation that is due here today is likely to hammer out a number of vital issues including assistance for the country's gas development strategies and promotion of South Asian regional energy integration, sources said.

Led by Acting Assistant Secretary for Policy and International Affairs of the Department of Energy, Calvin Humphrey, the delegation will try to identify 'weak areas' in Bangladesh's energy sector and solve those through co-operation.

"The team is likely to help promote technical assistance to build 'energy information systems' and develop an efficient domestic natural gas market, electric power sector and hydrocarbon resources with better management," said an official source.

The delegation will also pursue renewable energy and

rural electrification. Besides, the team will share the experiences of its 'Clean Cities Programme' in introducing alternative fuels such as CNG and LPG to reduce pollution in heavily populated areas.

The delegation also includes Foreign Affairs Officer and DOE (Department of Energy) Desk Officer for Bangladesh Tom Cutler, USAID Deputy Director Gordon Weyand, and a large number of officials and representatives of departments dealing with electricity, fossil fuel, environment, minerals, marine minerals renewable energy, and energy markets and contingency information.

This visit is a follow-up of the visit by US Energy Secretary Bill Richardson late last year. Sources said, one of the purposes of this delegation will be to prepare details of US-Bangladesh energy sector co-operation, in anticipation of Prime Minister Sheikh

Hasina's visit to the US in early April next.

Sources said, the DOE has identified some key areas of technical assistance and capacity building. These are:

a. Attracting foreign investment through legal, policy and regulatory reform: The DOE, USAID and USBBC will jointly organise a series of roundtables in Dhaka on legal, policy and regulatory reforms that would enhance the investment climate in the energy sector and attract foreign capital, based upon the experiences in the US and elsewhere. The focus will be on developing an efficient domestic natural gas market and electric power sector. This will be augmented by DOE's efforts to facilitate Bangladesh's attendance in relevant APEC forums as a guest, including the APEC Energy Working Group, Clean Fossil Fuels EG, and Natural Gas

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Three-week long Ekushey Book Fair opens

Anti-liberation forces raising head again, warns Hasina

As her opponents went on a fresh spell of agitation, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the Opposition parties have no right to inflict misery on the people by launching movement without a cause, reports UNB.

Inaugurating the three-week long Ekushey Boi Mela (Book Fair) in the Bangla Academy premises, she said the Opposition could build up movement on socio-economic issues, instead of creating sufferings of the people.

Hasina smelt a rat in their present state of anti-government agitation and warned that nobody would be able to survive doing 'conspiracy' against the people who are the real source of power.

The prime minister questioned the justification of the

current course of Opposition movement, which she said stands against public interests.

An allied Opposition, led by BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia, announced on Thursday a fresh course of movement, including hartal for February 9-10, in their bid to thwart the upcoming municipal elections.

"People have become conscious about their rights. Now the political parties have to give them due honour and attention if they want to govern. 'Gone are the days of seizing power through coup, conspiracy and killing,'

Sheikh Hasina scoffed at the comments of Opposition leader on her Calcutta trip. None has the right to comment on the religious beliefs and practices of a person, she said.

"Islam does not prohibit

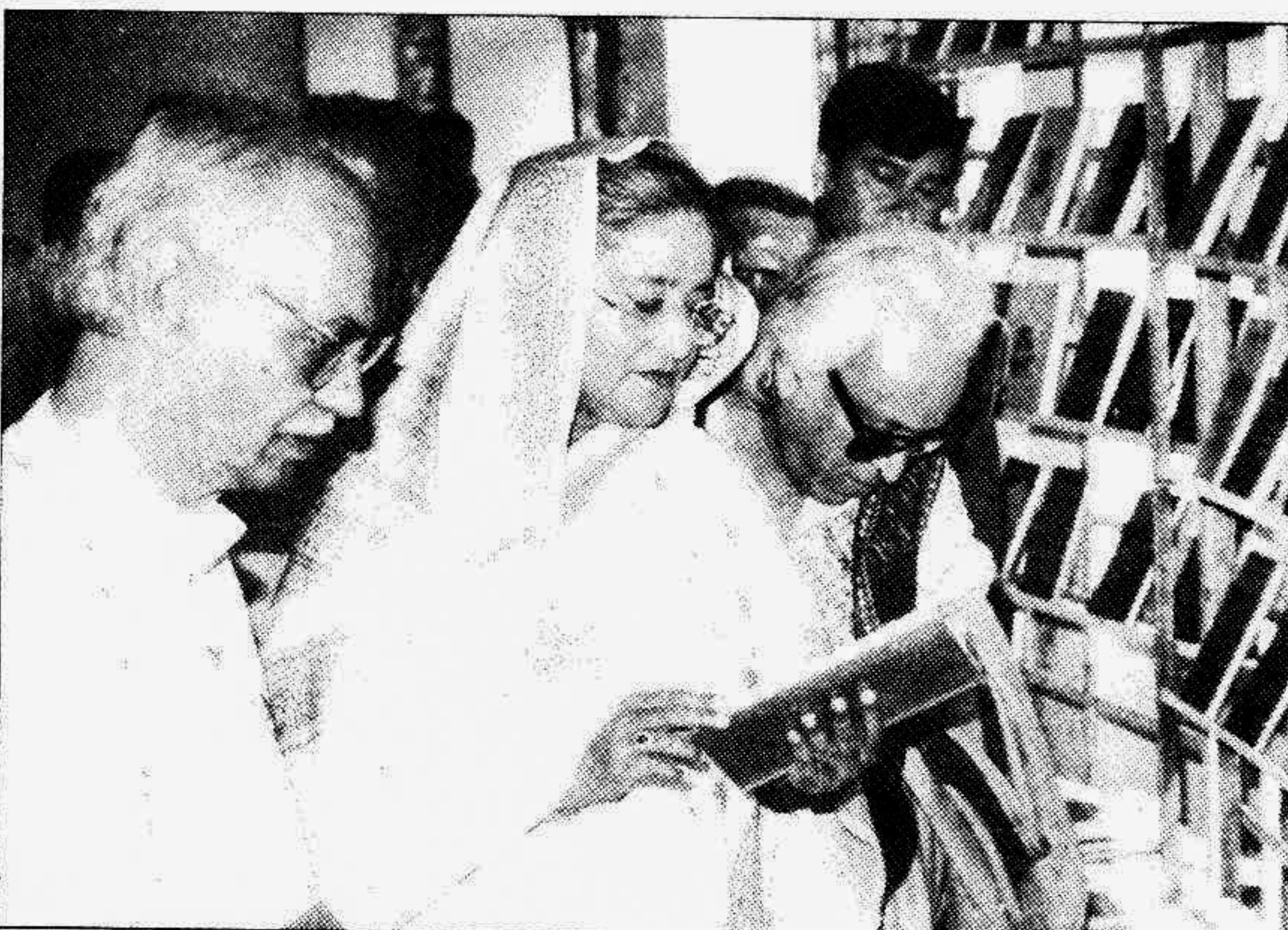
pursuing knowledge, practice of language and culture, rather encourages these things, and has given the right to practice one's own religion."

Hasina alleged a vicious circle of communal, reactionary and anti-liberation forces all ways raised a hue and cry to block the progress of the nation. "They vociferated on such issues in 1954, 1970 and now again were echoing that clamours."

In an oblique reference to the comment by the Leader of the Opposition that Bangladesh would be made into a vassal state, she asserted "none will dare to do so."

Rather those who bowed down to the superpowers would do such 'evil propaganda', she said, calling upon the people to

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, flanked by poet Shamsur Rahman (right) and National Professor Kabir Chowdhury (left), flips through a book at a stall after opening the Ekushey Boi Mela at the Bangla Academy premises in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Pirated textbooks flood market

By Gobinda Bar

As the education department failed to distribute textbooks to primary schools in time, some publishers are illegally publishing the books and selling those across the country.

During a visit to Banglabazar and Nilkhet book markets yesterday, this correspondent saw open sale of such illegally published textbooks. Books with the seal, 'For Free Distribution', were also selling.

The textbooks were found printed in different qualities of papers, showing that those were illegally printed by some publishing houses. The books published by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board

(NCTB) for free distribution are printed on white paper. It also prints primary text books on newspaper for selling through listed agents across the country at nominal prices. But the books available in the markets are of different qualities as regards paper and printing.

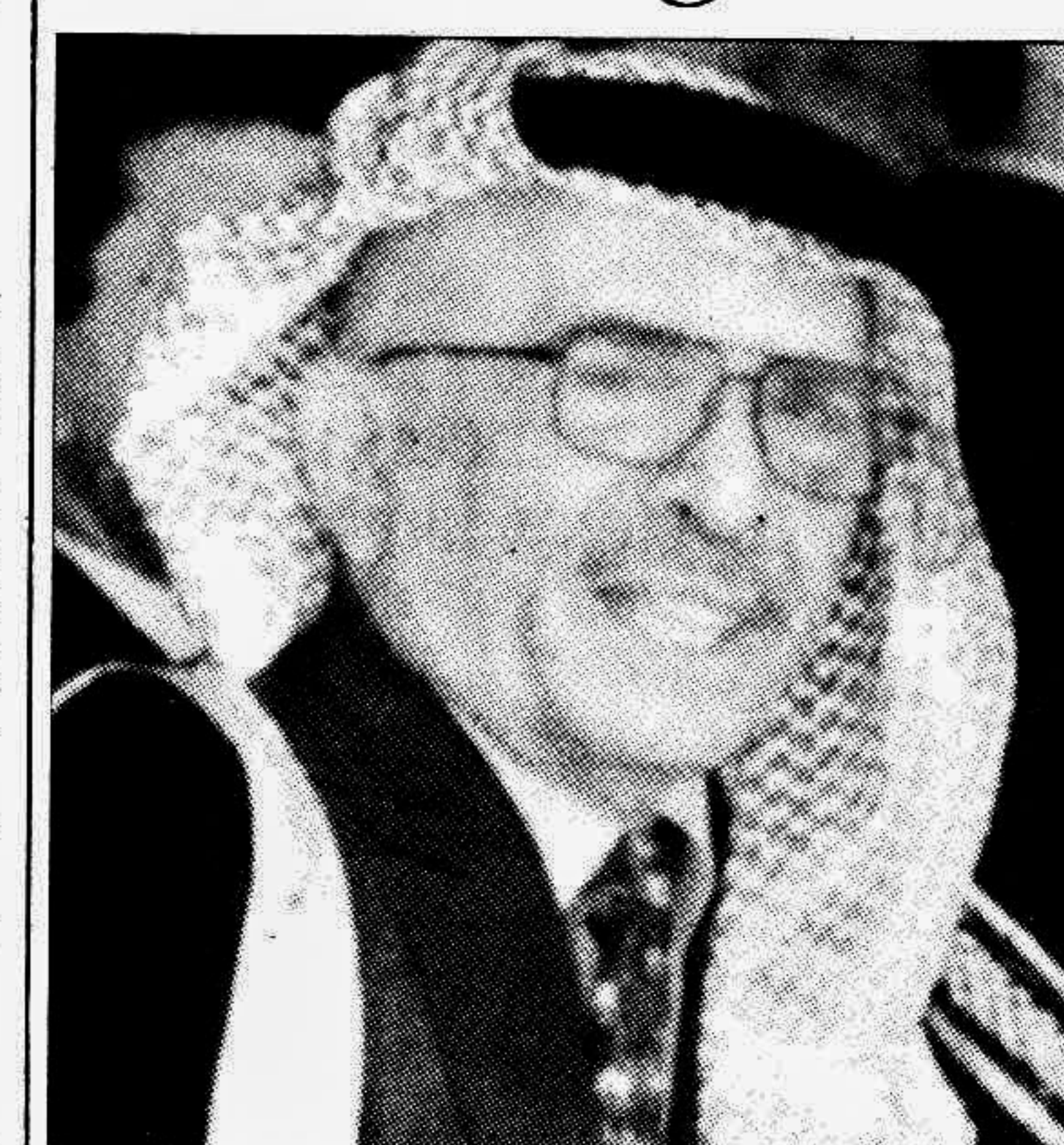
"Some publishing houses are making quick profit by illegally printing primary school text books," Mohammad Abu Taher, Secretary General of Bangladesh Publishers' and Booksellers' Association (BPBA) told The Daily Star when contacted. The books are printed at several places in the city and at Chowmahani and

Bogra, he said. He suggested that the books be printed in special paper to check this.

At the Banglabazar book market, booksellers charge prices at random. One set of white print books of class one is available at Tk 25, class two at Tk 25, class three at Tk 50, class four at Tk 60 and class five at Tk 70.

One set of books printed in newspaper for class one sells at Tk 20, class two at Tk 18, class three at Tk 55, class four at Tk 60 and for class five at Tk 70. Some book sellers at Banglabazar told this correspondent that they got books published by the NCTB from

The king comes home to die



King Hussein

—AP file photo

AMMAN, Feb 5: Jordan's King Hussein flew home from the United States today and was rushed into intensive care, as officials said there was no hope for his recovery from cancer and that he had come home to die.

The king is in agony. He is being kept alive by artificial means. There is no more hope."

AMMAN, Feb 5: Members of King Hussein's family were meeting today to decide when he should be taken off a life support machine keeping him alive in hospital here, a government source said. "It's more likely to be today than tomorrow," he told Reuters.

A top Jordanian official told AFP shortly after the king landed in Amman at 9:50 am (0750 GMT) from the United States where he had been treated for cancer.

The 63-year-old monarch, accompanied on the long flight by his wife Queen Noor and some of his children, was met by a low-key reception including his eldest son Crown Prince Abdullah and other members of the royal family, an official said.

Journalists and photogra-

phers were not admitted to the airport but witnessed the royal jet descending into Amman's international airport as it arrived from Ireland where it stopped for refueling.

Police were deployed along the 40-kilometre road from Amman to the airport, but traffic was running as usual.

The king was driven to the

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royal wing of the state-of-the-art Al-Husseini Medical Centre west of Amman, accompanied by a team of doctors who were closely monitoring his health after a nearly seven-month fight against non-hodgkin's lymphoma.

A group of soldiers surrounded the ambulance to salute the 63-year-old monarch and stop people approaching as he was carried by stretcher to intensive care and put on a respirator.

The royal entourage arrived there by road from the airport.

Jordanian newspapers heralded the return of the Middle East's longest serving ruler with banner headlines proclaiming 'Our master is home' and 'Hussein heads home to continue

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4 JCD protesters hurt in clash with police

By DU Correspondent

At least six persons, including a police man, were injured as the activists of Jatityabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) clashed with police near the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) yesterday morning.

Of the injured, five were identified as JCD's vice president Monjur Elahi, Dhaka South unit president of JCD Sagor Ahmed Sagor, two activists — Sujon and Jamal — and rickshawpuller Abdur Rasheed.

The injured JCD leaders and workers were admitted to a city clinic while the rickshawpuller was admitted to DMCH.

Witnesses said JCD brought out a procession from the city's Lalbagh area and was proceeding toward Bangla Academy to

protest. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's arrival on the academy premises.

The trouble erupted when po-

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Kidnapped housewife yet to be rescued

By Staff Correspondent

Police are yet to rescue a housewife, kidnapped by a gang of abductors from the city's Dhanmondi area on Saturday last.

The husband of the victim filed a case with Dhanmondi thana soon after the incident suspecting involvement of one Mahdir Mahmud Chanchal, an employee of a private bank in city's Chawk-Maulvibazar area.

According to police and the husband of the victim, the incident took place when she was returning to her Sukrabad residence in the evening with her teenage maid in a rickshaw. She was the mother of one child.

The gang on board two autorickshaws waylaid the rickshaw on Dhanmondi Road No 2, dragged her inside one of the vehicles wielding knives and drove off. Later, the maid informed her husband of the incident.

None was arrested in connection.

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48-hr hartal: AL won't go for confrontation

By Nazmul Ashraf and Rezaul Karim

The ruling Awami League is "doing everything" to let the February 23-25 municipal elections take place while the main opposition BNP and its allies are going ahead with their plans to resist the polls "at any cost", according to sources in the two sides.

A determined Opposition has already announced a country-wide 48-hour hartal on February 9-10, rejecting an appeal by the US ambassador. The request was made as scheduled visits of two US delegations would coincide with the general strike.

The agitating Opposition has also regretted a dialogue offered by Chief Election Commissioner, Mohammad Abu Hena, whose resignation is their main

demand, and also refused to sit with the ruling party for a negotiation to end the political crisis.

They are also firm to enforce a planned 96-hour strike, coinciding with the election dates, to press demands including a revamped Election Commission with a new chief and a fresh schedule for the polls.

As warned by BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, the Opposition may prolong the February 9-10 shutdown if the government repeats its "repression" on Opposition activists during the programme.

A member of the Opposition's Liaison Committee told The Daily Star that they may go for a one-point demand -- resignation of the government

-- but it all depends on the outcome of the "farical" election.

But unlike on previous occasions, the ruling party has decided not to confront the pro-hartal activists this time. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, also the AL president, has instructed her party colleagues to "ignore" the coming hartal, a source close to her said.

Speaking on Hasina's directive, a top AL leader viewed that "non-interference" in the 48-hour strike would "frustrate" the Opposition plan to intensify their street agitation against the municipal polls.

"If the opposition workers go for unprovoked action, they're bound to lose ground for a resist-election campaign," he said

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BSC running with only 15 vessels

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Feb 5: The fleet capacity of Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC) has shrunk drastically, posing a threat to its survival in the global competition, official sources said.

BSC is now running with a fleet of only 15 vessels with a total capacity of 2,26,224 DWT, down from 25 vessels with 3,81,550 DWT in '79-80.

The cargo carrying capacity of the BSC fleet is poised to fall further as three more vessels, identified as 'worn-out', are now under the process to be disposed of, the sources said.

These three vessels are Banglar Shova, Banglar Urmi and Banglar Asha.

BSC procured 38 vessels since its inception 27 years ago. But it was "forced" to dispose of 23 vessels so far as those were found not commercially viable. But there was no replacement due to fund shortage, the sources said.

Consequently, participation of BSC vessels in carrying cargo

in international routes is getting poorer day by day with old vessels, forcing the organisation to lose business.

Its ships carry only eight per cent of Bangladesh's export-import cargo now, although it is allowed to carry 40 per cent of the cargo under the Flag Protection Ordinance, the sources said.

When contacted, Managing Director of BSC Zulfiqar Haider Chowdhury said "We are trying to procure some vessels to cope

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Municipal polls

Fresh list of 'criminals' being prepared

The police headquarters directed all concerned to prepare a list of the criminals before the forthcoming municipal elections, reports UNB.

Police have already prepared a list of thousands of 'criminals' across the country, but a fresh list is being prepared specially ahead of election, official sources said.

The list will contain names of notorious criminals as well as political activists who may create violence during the up-

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Urgent Notice Regarding VAT

Sub: Time limit extension up to 28.02.99 for changing to new 10-digit Registration number from old 8-digit Registration number.

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Rajshahi Phone: 761421 Jessore Phone: 4020

National Board of Revenue

DFP-1734-31/1
G-203

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