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Dhaka, Moscow sign military tech cooperation agreement

Bangladesh and Russia signed an agreement on Military Technical Cooperation here yesterday, reports UNB.

The visiting Russian Deputy Minister of Trade, VA Pakhomov and Defence Secretary Syed Yusuf Hossain signed the agreement on behalf of their respective governments at the Ministry of Defence at Ganobhaban.

The agreement provides for identification, initiation and expansion of possible areas of collaboration between the two countries in the field of technical cooperation.

Russian Ambassador to Bangladesh YP Ivanov and officials concerned were present on the occasion.

Earlier, the Russian Deputy Minister called on the Defence Secretary at his office and discussed matters of mutual interest and bilateral cooperation.

Welcoming the Russian delegation, Yusuf recalled with gratification the important role of Russia in the war of liberation in 1971 and said the existing bond of friendship would continue to grow.

Pakhomov and his delegation visited the Army Headquarters and called on Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Muhammad Mustafizur Rahman and discussed matters of common interest and mutual cooperation.

The Russian Deputy Minister also visited Shikha Anirban (the Eternal Flame) at the Dhaka Cantonment and placed wreaths.

Hartal halts books fair

By DU Correspondent

The Amar Ekushey Book Fair virtually remained closed yesterday due to the country-wide hartal.

The fair, however, began at about 6 pm yesterday instead of 3 pm as usual.

Most of the 213 bookstalls were found closed yesterday except Shekar, Amar Prakasan, Jatiya Grantha Prakasan, Dhaka Prakasan and Bangla Academy Pustak Bikroy Prakasan.

The Bangla Academy had earlier postponed all its traditional programmes. But they did not say whether the fair would remain open or not.

Authors who came at the Academy in the afternoon to open their stalls were not allowed to enter the Academy premises. Moreover, the main entrance of the Academy remained closed and no visitors were allowed inside the Academy till 6 pm yesterday.

Talking to The Daily Star, one author said, "It is very disappointing that the authors were not informed that the fair would remain closed." He blamed "indiscipline of the authorities" for this mess.

Meanwhile, a good number

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Minister says

By DU Correspondent
"Is Bangla Academy your own? Do you observe hartal at Bangla Academy? I can't really appreciate it."

Oibaidul Quader, the State Minister for Sports, Youth and Cultural Affairs, hurled these questions at Academy DG Dr Syed Anwar Hossain when he saw the stalls at the Ekushey Book Fair closed.

Oibaidul Quader came to the Academy at about 4:30 pm to see if the fair is open. The fair usually begins at 3 pm everyday but opened at about 6 pm yesterday after Quader's visit.

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US predicts oil price at \$15 by year end

US court ruling hits Asian phone firms

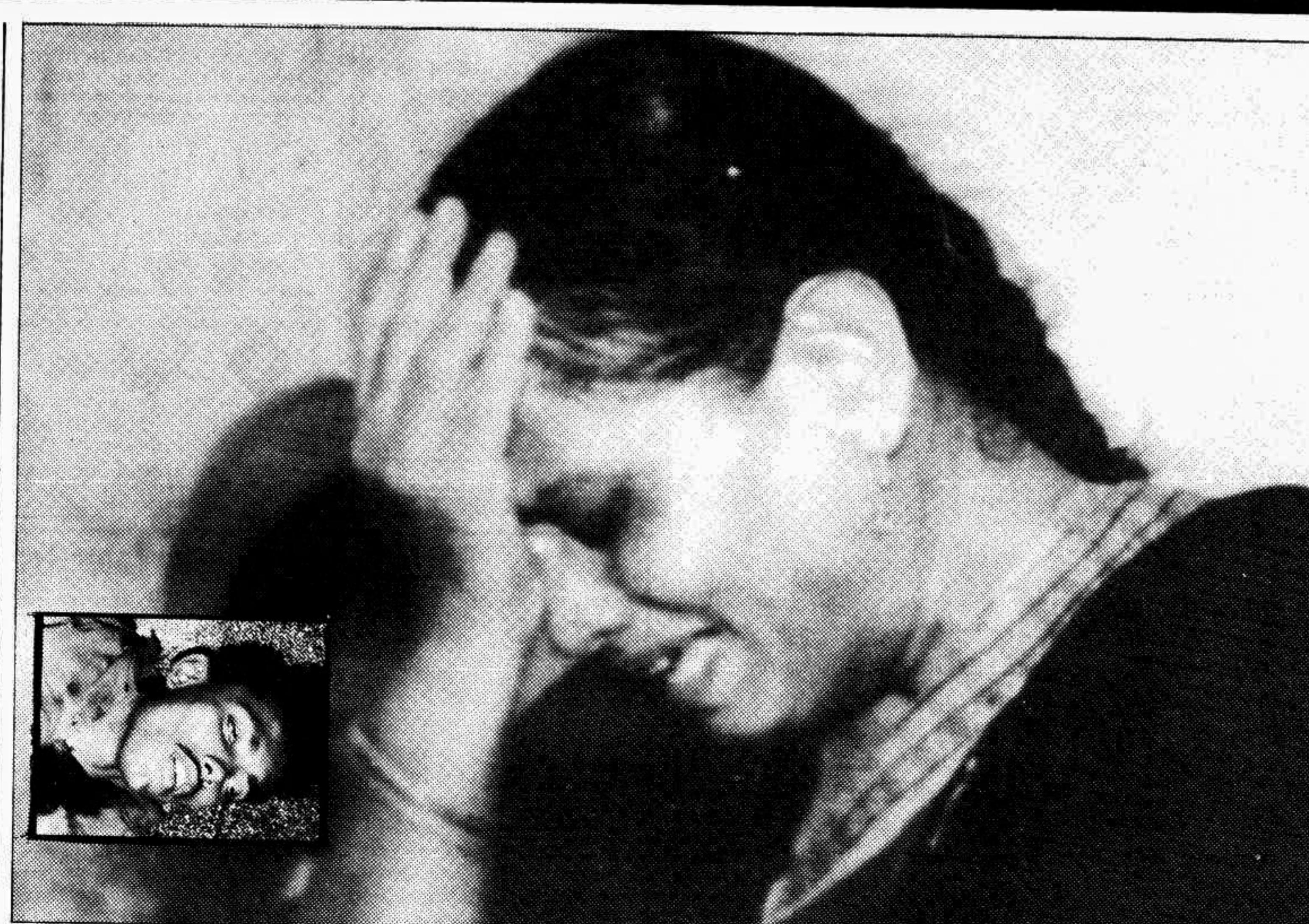
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Prayer Timings

February 10

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

Source: Islamic Foundation



Mother's grief

Twenty-five-year-old Sajal Chowdhury (inset), a student of Dr Malika Science College in the city, was killed by a bullet fired by anti-hartal demonstrators near the Science Laboratory crossing (see our story). The grief stricken mother waited all day for son's body, which was kept at BIRDEM mortuary by relatives awaiting his father's arrival from Sylhet. This lady is the latest addition to a long list of such mothers who have despaired on hartal days. But politicians still refuse to stop using the deadly political weapon.

— Star photo

One killed, 200 hurt on first day of hartal

By Staff Correspondent

At least one person was killed in Dhaka city and more than 200 others, including 10 policemen, one of them critically, were injured on the first day of the opposition-sponsored nationwide 60-hour hartal yesterday which widely disrupted normal life.

Police arrested 240 people in the capital on charges of picketing and hurling of bombs, setting fire on vehicles and rioting.

Clashes took place in different parts of the city involving pro- and anti-hartal elements and police who used batons, teargas and rubber bullets.

Reports from Star correspondents in Chittagong, Rajshahi and Khulna said the strike was mostly peaceful in these cities barring some clashes in Rajshahi where 20 people were injured.

In Chittagong city, the har-

tal passed off peacefully. However, cargo handling and delivery of goods to and from the port remained suspended.

In Khulna, the strike was peaceful. But 10 people were injured at Pabna in clashes between police and pro-hartal activists.

Bangladesh Biman said it had to cancel three domestic flights and rescheduled one international flight.

The capital and elsewhere in the country were interrupted during the hartal, with small number of pedal rickshaws, some buses and tempos operating in the city, where schools remained closed and attendance was thin at offices.

Paramilitary BDR, riot police, armed cops and Ansars guarded shuttered street junctions. Banks and stock exchanges did not transact any business. But inter-bank trading on foreign exchange was carried out on wire by some banks. Long distance buses re-

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Hartal extended till 6pm tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition extended its hartal upto 6 pm Thursday protesting death of a JCD worker and the ruling party's terrorism yesterday.

Earlier a 48-hour shutdown was called to press their demands including resignation of the Chief Election Commissioner and rescheduling of the February 23-25 municipal elections.

Extension of the general strike by 12 hours was announced at a press briefing of the alliance of BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote at the Minto Road official residence of the Leader of the Opposition yesterday evening.

Addressing the newsmen, BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, MP warned that they would launch an oust-government agitation if their

demands were not met immediately.

"If we're forced to go in that direction, we'll not leave the streets until the fall of the government," he said.

Bhuiyan termed hartal as the "most innocent" form of agitation which "means we'll not work and will stay at home." But the opposition workers are being subjected to government repression during such an agitation, he said.

"Since the British rule", he said, "Hartal has been playing a significant role in the democratic movement in the Sub-continent. AL enforced hartal for 173 days but those were never obstructed," he said and accused the ruling party of using the armed goons and the police against hartal supporters.

"Our hartal is observed more

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Mob sets Daily Star vehicle ablaze

By Staff Correspondent

At about 11:15 am some 200 BNP pickets sat on the road opposite the police box at the intersection of Elephant Road and Mirpur Road. Police requested the pickets to clear the thoroughfare.

When the pickets refused to comply, the police moved in to disperse them. Chased by the stick-wielding riot police, the protesters, comprised mostly of young boys and men, scattered in different directions.

A group of about 20 of these pickets fled into Rd-3 nearby. Upon reaching The Daily Star office, a few of them started kicking and pouncing on the on-duty autorickshaw which was stationed in front of the gate. Urged on by other fleeing mob members, some started to push the autorickshaw away from its initial position. The driver and the security guards stood inside the boundary of the DUCSU building.

When contacted, Cain's local Adviser MR Islam confirmed the version of the official.

The official also claimed that Petrobangla had been informed of the deal between Cain and Shell.

Petrobangla officials how-

BCL drives JCD activists out of DU campus

By DU Correspondent

Jatiyatabdali Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student wing of opposition BNP could not observe its annual programme on the Dhaka University campus yesterday as they were ousted from the campus by the BCL activists.

Witnesses said police intercepted the JCD activists from entering the Madhu's Canteen when they came to observe the hartal on the campus at about 7 am.

The JCD, however, entered the canteen where the activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) were staying to foil the hartal programme.

Tension gripped the Madhu's canteen area as both the groups chased each other.

At about 10 am, a group of JCD activists brought out a procession on the campus under police surveillance. But the BCL activists started hurling of brick-bats on the JCD men when their procession came in front of the DUCSU building.

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Sajal's killers came from the ruling party convoy

By Staff Correspondent

In an obvious show of strength yesterday Haji Moqbul MP from city's Mohammandpur-Dhanmondi constituency led a motorcade of more than 10 cars and a couple of minibuses at around 11:30 am. As his convoy reached the intersection of Mirpur Road and Green Road, it confronted a group of BNP activists on the run after being chased by police from Elephant Road and Mirpur Road intersection.

From the rear of the convoy, some armed men descended from private cars and minibuses and started to chase the BNP activists through the petrol pump in the corner, witnesses said. The armed men caught two young men and started to drag them towards the motorcade that waited on the Mirpur Road. At one point the men hit one of the captives in his head with a revolver and shot another in the chest point blank, witnesses said. A police officer who was leading a dozen policemen in riot gear stood silently nearby.

Five minutes later, the motorcade made a U-turn and stopped at the top of Road-3 facing towards Mirpur. Haji Moqbul Hossain sat in the front

seat of a white Pajero in which others were seen carrying guns. Other cars of the convoy were packed with activists many of whom openly brandished weapons in their hands, witnesses said. The motorcade then slowly drove off towards Mirpur.

The dead was identified as Sajal Chowdhury, 25, a resident of Shahidur Rahman Chowdhury, a resident of city's West Dhanmondi area, police and hospital sources said. He was an activist of JCD, his friends and brother-in-law told reporters at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Police witnessed the brutal killing from Science Laboratory crossing. Fatally injured Sajal was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where attending doctors declared him dead.

The body was handed over to relatives of the dead about 3:30 pm after autopsy at the DMCH morgue. According to Niaz Ahmed, Sajal's brother-in-law, relatives kept the body at BIRDEM morgue.

The body will be kept at the morgue until his father, a lawyer who has been at Sylhet, return Dhaka", said Niaz.

BNP has no faith in democracy: Zillur

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League general secretary Zillur Rahman has urged all democratic forces and people at large to maintain peace and stability in the country and make the coming municipal polls a success.

The AL leader in a statement issued yesterday said that elections to 140 paurashavas would be held from February 23 to 25 in a free and peaceful manner to fulfil the constitutional obligation.

He warned the reactionary forces led by Begum Khaleda Zia against any attempt of grabbing power through unconstitutional means.

Zillur Rahman lambasted the opposition movement on a four-point demand saying that those parties were engaged in activities against the nation and the country.

Terming them as conspirators, AL general secretary said that they were creating anarchy with a blueprint to kill pro-liberation political leaders and intellectuals and to save the convicted killers of Bangabandhu.

Zillur Rahman said that government would ensure free, fair and peaceful holding of the municipal polls and added that, "people, government and democratic forces are providing the Election Commission with all cooperation."

Referring to Begum Zia's threat of resigning from the parliament, the AL leader said that Begum Zia and her party had no faith in parliamentary democracy and democratic norms.

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Cairns says it's not going bag and baggage

By Sharier Khan

A top Cairns official said yesterday that the British company would remain in Bangladesh as Shell's partner. The company had surprised everyone Monday by announcing to its local employees that it would pull out from Bangladesh by transferring all its concerns to Shell Oil.

However, the "operatorship" of Cain's two blocks including Sangu gas field would completely go to Shell Oil. The Cain official in Dhaka told The Daily Star.

When contacted, Cain's local Adviser MR Islam confirmed the version of the official.

The official also claimed that Petrobangla had been informed of the deal between Cain and Shell.

Petrobangla officials how-

government, as the signatory to the contract, can only verify the financial and technical status of that company.

Cain's announcement was made simultaneously at the London Stock Exchange and at its Dhaka office Monday.

The Cain official claimed that after June, Cain would not completely pull out all its activities from Bangladesh. It would retain an office and some employees and act as a partner of Shell Oil.

Shell Oil would then execute all decisions and deal with the government for transfer of operatorship for particular blocks. Cain would participate only in exploration.

"When it comes to gas or oil field or structural development, Cain's performance is much better than Cain's. Cain is

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Makbul denies involvement

Makbul Hossain MP of ruling Awami League has denied his involvement in the killing of Sajal Chowdhury in Science Laboratory area during hartal hours yesterday.

"I have no connection with the incident. I did not