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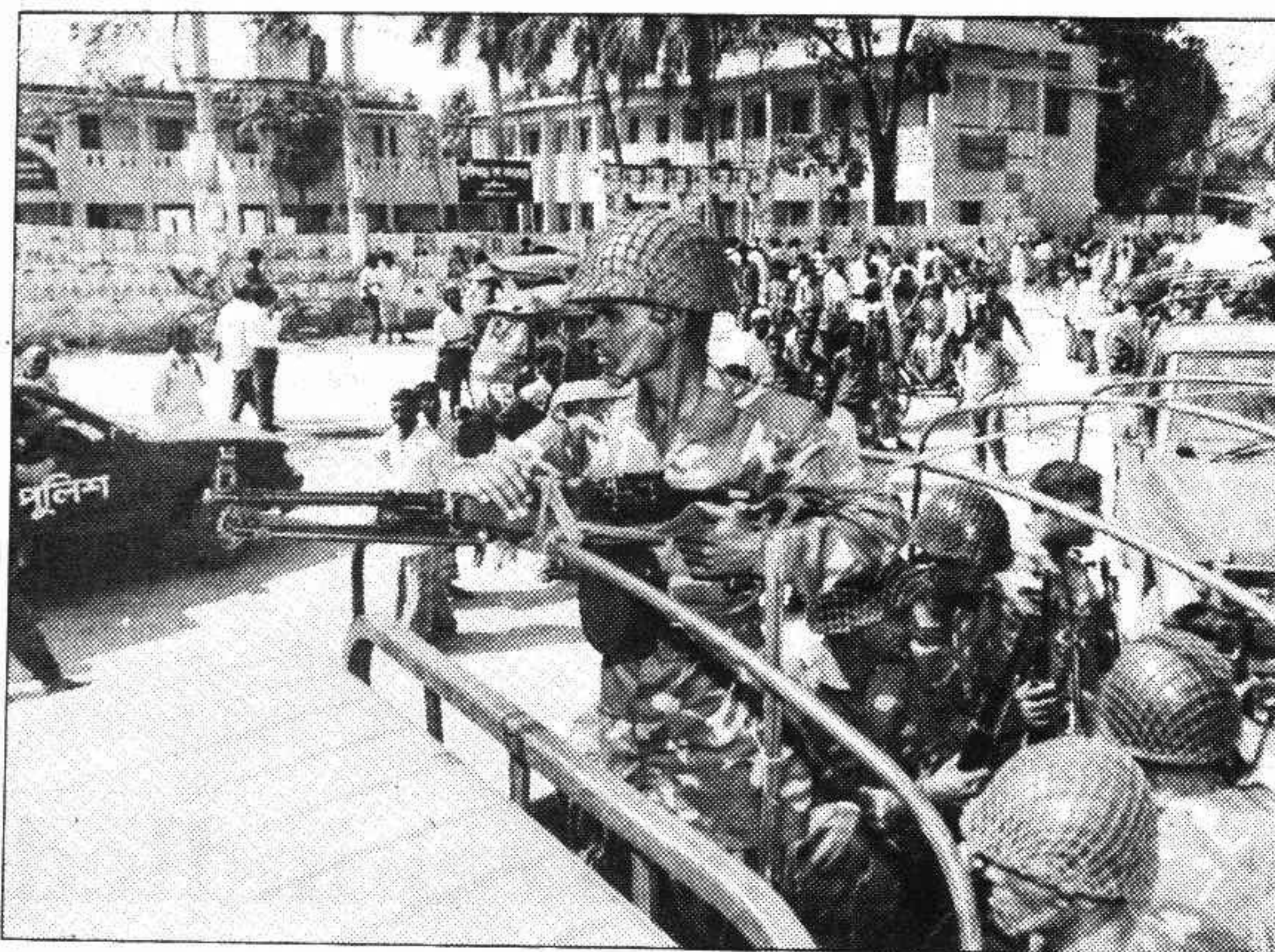
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Army personnel near a polling centre in Munshiganj Municipality yesterday. —Star photo

## Municipal polls

From Page 1

The centres are Rajballavpur, Sherpur High School, Kasba Kathgarh Government Primary School, Kharpur Victoria GK Pilot High School, Adarsha Bidyapith, Government Girls High School, Sheikh Hat, Gouripur, Kaliganj and Dhakalhati.

Witnesses said at the Sheikhhat Centre, police opened fire to disperse a mob when the supporters of two commissioner candidates tried to capture polling booths.

Both the groups set off huge crude bombs leaving 16 people injured in the blasts, including policeman Golam Mostafa, police said.

Election at Matlab pourashava was postponed amidst snatching of ballot papers and boxes by unruly mobs.

The trouble-makers reportedly stormed the Matlab Degree College centre blasting crude bombs during the polling at 11:30 in the morning which scared away the voters, official sources and witnesses said.

In another incident, angry people allegedly created disturbances at JB Pilot High School and Bordia High School centres. At least 20 people were injured, seven of them critically during the stray incidents reported from the district town. The seriously injured were rushed to Matlab Health Complex.

## Oil tanker owners postpone strike till Feb 28

Bangladesh Oil Tanker Owners' Association has postponed its proposed strike programme till February 28, reports BSS.

The association, considering the national interest, postponed its programme at a meeting recently between the leaders of the association and the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC).

It would, however, enforce its programme from March 1, if the demands were not met by February 28.

## BNP: Voter turnout

From Page 1

of the remaining 25 percent did not turn out to cast their vote in the "one-party election."

Bhuiyan said, according to messages received from different sources there was no voter at many polling centres till 11 am although voting started at 8 am. The government, despite using its entire administration and law enforcers including Army, failed to ensure turn out of 10 percent voters, he claimed.

He expressed the apprehension that the government, in collaboration with the Election Commission, might show a high percentage of vote by casting false votes.

He said the opposition parties have given sufficient time to the government to fulfil their 4-point demand. The Opposition enforced a 12-hour countrywide hartal on January 26, a 60-hour hartal on February 9-11 and staged peaceful demonstrations, but the government didn't pay any heed to its demands, he said.

Instead, the government leaders including the Prime Minister continued to make provocative statements and resorted to repressive measures.

Moreover, the ruling party activists launched armed attack on opposition activists during hartal and obstructed

ing his ruling party rival.

He secured 3,601 votes to defeat Awami League candidate Anwar Hossain Akon who polled 2,152.

As the local liaison committee called off the opposition's hartal there, about 80.59 per cent voters out of 7,172 cast votes in a peaceful atmosphere.

On the opening day yesterday, voting took place in 54 pourasavas. The municipalities include 17 in Rajshahi division, seven in Khulna, five in Barisal, 15 in Dhaka, four in Sylhet and six in Chittagong division.

The pourasavas are Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Dinajpur, Nilphamari, Rangpur, Ulupur, Govindaganj, Joypurhat, Bogra, Nawabganj, Godagari, Tanore, Natore, Sirajganj, Bera, Faridpur, Satthia, Kushtia, Alamdanga, Kotchandpur, Moheshpur, Jessore, Narail, Bagerhat, Patharghata, Mathbaria, Banaripara, Jhalakathi, Char Fasion, Madhupur Ghatil, Dhanbari, Gouripur, Iswarganj, Nandail, Mohanganj, Bajitpur, Jamalpur, Sherpur, Munshiganj, Pangsha, Kalkini, Gopalganj, Naria, Sunamganj, Habiganj, Shayestaganj, Moulvibazar, Brahmanbaria, Barura, Laxmipur, Kabirhat, Basurhat and Bandarban.

## Poll results

From Page 1

Mirza Sakawatul Alam (25,510 votes); Maheshpur (Jhenidai) — Shafiqul Alam Khan (5,039 votes); Satthia (Pabna) — Mohammad Moazzam Haq (7,582 votes); Narail (Narail) — M Nizamuddin Khan Nilu (7,194 votes); Munshiganj (Munshiganj) — Anisuzzaman (12,478 votes); Bandarban (Bandarban) — M Ayub Chowdhury (6,961 votes); Bagerhat (Bagerhat) — ASM Atahar Hossain (9,168 votes); Habiganj (Habiganj) — M Shahiduddin Chowdhury (9,507 votes); Char Fasion (Bhola) — Mannan Hawlader (3,533 votes); Matbaria (Porjura) — Rafiuddin Ahmed (2,600 votes); Jhalakathi (Jhalakathi) — Baylat Hossain (6,524 votes); Banaripara (Barisal) — Golam Saleh Manju Mollah (1,026 votes); Rangpur (Rangpur) — Kazi Mohammad Zinnun (32,031 votes); Ulupur (Kurigam) — Golam Mostafa (5,594 votes);

(Incomplete)

## SSC examinees allowed to use ordinary calculators

By Staff Correspondent

Ordinary calculators will be allowed in examination halls during SSC examinations this year, beginning from March 4, official sources said yesterday.

Ordinary calculators like FS100 will be allowed but not the special type of calculators with memory and other functions, "an official of the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE), Dhaka told the Daily Star. "Use of normal calculators is allowed by the Board's laws," he added.

Teachers often get confused over the use of calculators in examination halls fearing that students may take the opportunity to copy various information and data," another official said.

The Board will explain on the BTV from February 26 different matters relating to the upcoming SSC examinations, he said.

There were confusion and controversy over use of calculators last year when students were not allowed to use even normal calculators in SSC and HSC examinations at many places including the city.

## 30 municipalities

From Page 1

tions will be held in four municipalities: Patuakhali, Gournadi, Borhanuddin and Daulatkhan.

In Chittagong division, polling will take place in two municipalities: Chandina and Rangpur, while only one municipality under Sylhet Division — Nabiganj municipality — is scheduled to go to election today.

## Khaleda

From Page 1

observed. "People were in no way involved in this farcical game. Instead, they have rejected the one-party polls."

She alleged that the government resorted to repressive measures against opposition leaders and workers. Despite threats, the government completely failed to bring voters to polling centres, she claimed.

She congratulated the people for "spontaneously observing" the first day's hartal and urged them to continue the programme today and tomorrow to resist the government's "blueprint".

Begum Zia strongly condemned police for "laying a siege" to the BNP central office in the city for a long time yesterday.

## WTO chief

From Page 1

other LDCs posted about the activities of the world trade body. Ruggiero further informed that a WTO mission would visit Bangladesh next month to evaluate Dhaka's customs system. Another mission would follow soon to organise a national workshop on capacity building.

"We can't solve all our problems through trade," he said adding that WTO was moving ahead with an integrated approach with other major international agencies, like the World Bank, IMF and UNDP, for capacity building of the LDCs in education, health and poverty alleviation.

Ruggiero said that LDCs need technical assistance and resources for increasing their capacity and professional skill in various fields to survive in the competitive and globalised trade regime. Towards that end, WTO would support the Debt Relief Programme for the LDCs.

As a successor to GATT, the WTO's objective is to create a rule-based, inter-dependent world having respect for mutual and reciprocal interests, said Ruggiero, who is due to end his tenure on April 30 this year.

He said: "Our organisation is based on consensus. All major decisions have to be ratified by governments of the member countries."

## Series of clashes in Savar, 30 injured

By JU Correspondent

At least 30 people were injured and about 15 shops burnt to ashes as a sequel to a series of clashes between showowners and employees of Savar Dairy Farm and students of Jahangirnagar University (JU) yesterday morning and Monday evening.

The clash broke out Monday evening after an altercation between two JU students and some showowners over cleanliness in a hotel at the JU dairy farm gate. The showowners, at one stage, beat Alim, a JU student and later manhandled Arif, another student, who tried to save Alim.

As the news of the assault broke out on the campus, enraged students attacked the showowners and set fire to the roadside shops near the dairy farm gate area. At least 15 shops were raged to the ground.

It was followed by another round of clash after another JU student came under attack from some dairy farm youths near the social science faculty on the university campus at around 9:30 am, yesterday.

As news of the incident reached halls, hundreds of students attacked the dairy farm and damaged several buildings there. The showowners and dairy farm residents in a bid to resist the students launched a counter-attack using hand-made bombs and firearms. At least 10 rounds of bullet were fired during the hour-long battle.

## Violation of code of conduct by minister alleged

Some chairman candidates vying for Khagrachhari municipal election brought allegations against a minister for violating the election code of conduct, reports UNB.

Mong Kaw Ching Chowdhury, who is contesting for chairman post in the Khagrachhari pourashava with bus symbol, in a statement yesterday alleged that CHT Affairs Minister Kalpa Ranjan Chakma is campaigning for Awami League backed chairman candidate Arunodoy Chakma.

Among the five chairman candidates, the other three are Abul Kashem, former district president of BNP and incumbent chairman, Zafarullah and Nirmal Dash.

Polling in the municipality is scheduled for tomorrow. Mong Chowdhury alleged that the CHT Affairs minister along with supporters by using government vehicles and residing in the district Circuit House.

Two persons — Noor Hossain, 25, and Nazim, 26, received injuries during the clash. Police were deployed in the troubled area at around 11 am, amid heightening tension.

Both sides lodged separate cases with Savar thana.

The local people were scheduled to sit for a discussion with the JU Vice-chancellor last night, but the meeting had not started till filing this report at around 9 pm.

## 4 pro-peace activists kidnapped in Khagrachhari

Four pro-peace activists were abducted from Pujan area in Panchhari thana of the hill district today, reports UNB.

The PCJSS in a press release blamed the anti-peace Proshitt-Sanchay faction of Pahari Chhatra Parishad for kidnapping four students Sumon Chakma, Shanti Bikash Chakma, Pulin Bihari Chakma and Gul Chakma at gunpoint at 11 am.

Leaders of the Parbatya Chhatragram Jano Sanghati Samity demanded immediate rescue of the four students and exemplary punishment to the kidnappers.

There has been a spurt of terrorist acts like abduction, killing, toll collection and intimidation perpetrated by the terrorists since the signing of the peace accord to foil it," said the PCJSS with a note of concern.

## Injured housewife dies at DMCH

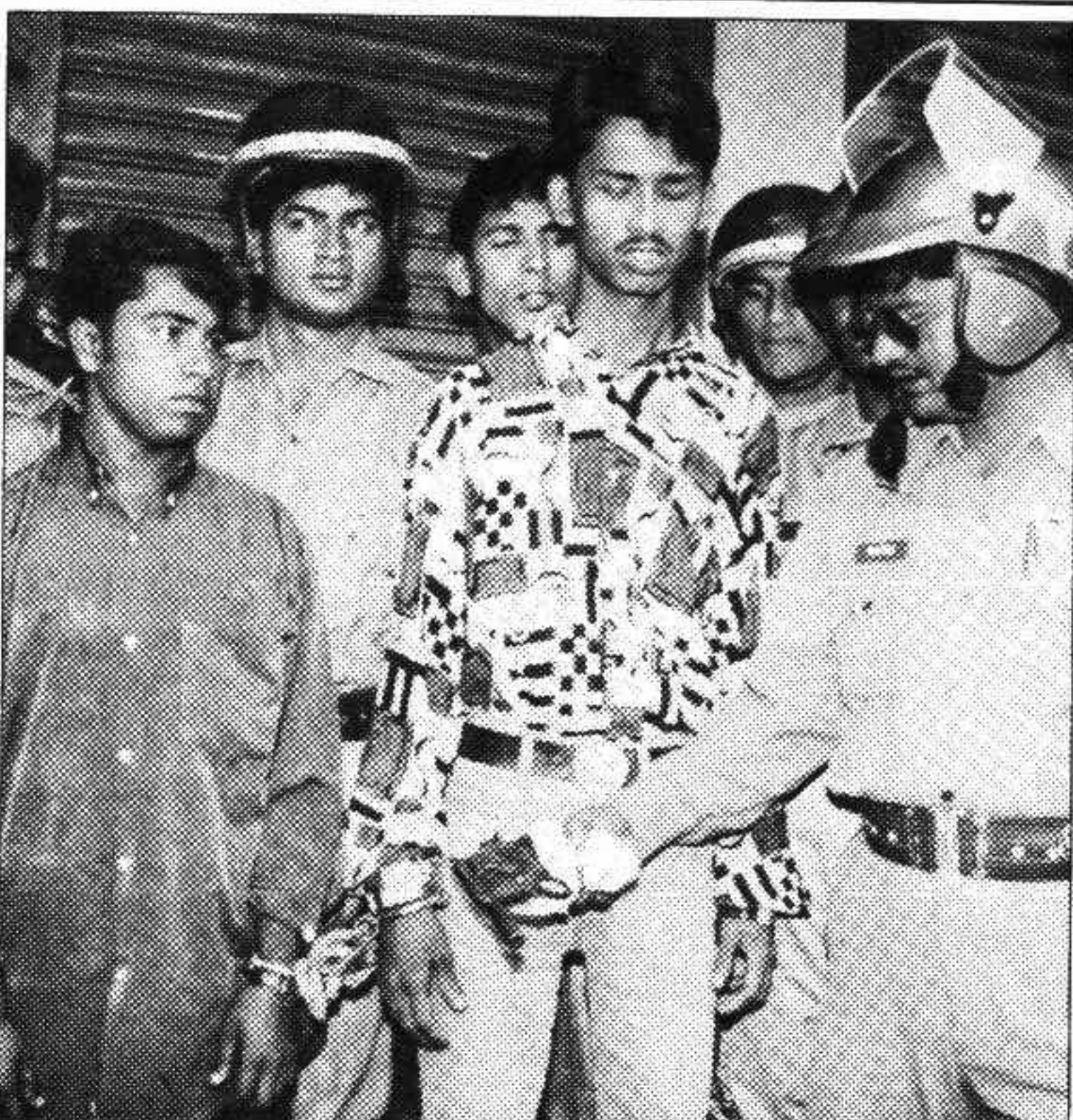
By Staff Correspondent

A young housewife who received burn injuries on Friday died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday morning.

Police and hospital sources identified the dead as Salma Begum, 20, wife of Hafizur Rashid of 40/4 Rahim Scott under Dhanmondi thana in the city.

Hospital sources quoting Salma's relatives said her husband and mother-in-law had seriously beaten her on Friday for dowry collection. Later, they poured kerosene and set her on fire. Critically injured Salma was rushed to DMCH where she succumbed to her injuries yesterday.

When contacted, the duty officer at Dhanmondi thana said an unnatural death case was lodged by the victim's father yesterday. None was arrested till yesterday night.



The two young men, identified as Selim and Babu, were arrested from city's Moghbazar Rail crossing yesterday afternoon. A revolver with three bullets were also recovered from their possession. —Star photo

## Unauthorised clinics

From Page 1

the problem, we proposed that a team represented by Bangladesh Medical Association, BPCOA and the government be formed to curb activities of the unauthorised private clinics. There has been no response yet."

The unauthorised private clinics are mainly engaged in services like offering termination of pregnancy, a practice forbidden by law, in the name of menstruation regulation (MR).

Unofficial estimates say more than 500 illegal abortions are done everyday in the clinics. It is the most common among dozens of illegal activities carried out by the unauthorised private clinics.

Any profitable deal such as treatment of bullet wounds, normally refused at private clinics, is available at the unauthorised clinics. The illegal business offers almost all services from simple nursing to complicated surgeries. Allegations say, most of these clinics operate without qualified doctors or nurses. Many clinics were found to operate without having proper equipment. During an investigation by

the Daily Star the infrastructure and logistic support in the city clinics were found to be extremely poor. In most of the cases, the clinics were found housed in filthy, small and congested houses in busy residential areas.

Many patients looking to buy cheaper services in the clinics ended up availing wrong diagnosis. On many occasions patients were treated wrongly and this resulted in them being crippled for life.

Statistics there are 546 registered private clinics in the country, 205 of them being in the city.

The Director General of health services Professor A K M Nurul Anwar said, "Due to health directorate's weaknesses, particularly, lack of proper vigilance many unregistered private clinics have emerged. In addition, the existing ordinance has some loopholes that allow growth of unregistered private clinics."

The DG also said that existing disciplinary actions are ineffective. He feels that strict penalty for violating rules should be imposed in order to curb such illegal businesses.

## D-8 officials

From Page 1

President of Iran and Pakistan Prime Minister are expected to join the summit. They will be arriving from February 28.

Besides, two high-powered delegations from Egypt and Nigeria will attend the summit.

The summit is expected to take steps to enhance economic cooperation based on some specific resources of the member countries. The first D-8 summit identified 13 areas, of cooperation.

The high-level meeting at the Bangladesh Secretariat discussed protocol, security, accommodation, publicity and other logistic measures for the summit.

The Prime Minister stressed the need for a massive publicity through media to make the people aware of the objectives as well as outcome of the summit.

Hasina asked for projecting the culture and heritage of the country and making those known to members of the participating countries.

She also directed the authorities concerned to project the history of the participating countries.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria, Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed, Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim, Home Minister Rafiqul Islam, Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Engr Mosharraf Hossain, City Mayor Mohammad Hanif, State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayed, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, Cabinet Secretary Kazi Shamul Alam and officials concerned attended the meeting.

## Tortured maid

From Page 1

Ramna police said, acting on an information, they raided the house and rescued the girl. Two officials of the Women's Affairs Department accompanied them during the raid, police said. None was arrested in connection with the incident till last night.

Police said last night that they filed a general diary but did not get any written complaint regarding the incident.

## Beximco loans

From Page 1

waiver of profit of the IFIC Bank Ltd which could be done only by a meeting of the shareholders of the bank, as provided by Section 107 of the Companies Act, 1994."

The repayment arrangements also allowed the Beximco Group, on each of its instalment, to get a deduction of 80 per cent on principal amount and 20 per cent on interest against the loans from IFIC.

The shareholder in his petition said that the BB's approval of rescheduling terms was also a violation of section 107 of Companies Act 1994 and would result in a loss of Tk 11.42 crore in one year.

In 1999 alone, the petitioner said, it would mean a waiver of more than Tk 2.20 crore from payment of "interest on remaining portion of principal" and about Tk 9.22 crore from payment of interest on accrued interest.

Before approval of waiver of such huge amount of profit in the process of rescheduling of Beximco Group loans, the petitioner contended, no annual general meeting of the IFIC Bank was held. "But all the same chairman and vice-chairman of the bank who are also directors of Beximco Group, influenced the IFIC Bank to forward proposals for re-scheduling the loans without caring to comply with the requirement of the Companies Act, 1994."

"Bangladesh Bank is not authorised under any law to exercise any supervisory control on the schedule/commercial banks to the extent of causing loss to any commercial bank in the name of rescheduling of loan for the benefit of any particular group of company owned by a group of persons."

## Hartal: Two killed

From Page 1

anti-hartal activists on the city streets was much less than it was on similar occasions in the past. Rival supporters demonstrated mainly in Motijheel, Gulistan, Purana Paltan, Bijoynagar, Naya Paltan and Kakrail areas. Police and paramilitary BDR personnel were deployed at strategic points all over the city.

In some other city areas, both ruling and opposition parties also brought out processions but no clash between the rival groups was reported.

Rickshaws plied the city streets in larger numbers while a good number of state-run BRTC buses and private mini buses and tempos travelled the main thoroughfares.

Retailers, other than those of medicine and food, businesses and schools remained closed while some commercial banks operated with their main entrances closed. Government offices were open but attendance was thin.

Motor launches, except a few, did not leave the city's Sadarghat terminal. Long-distance buses did not move. Trains ran almost normal, pro-hartal activists stopped the one on Shantahar-Lalmonirhat route. At Bonarpara, opposition workers had a coach laid on the tracks, forcing trains on Bonarpara-Shantahar route to stop plying.

Almost all flights left Zia on schedule. Only the Dhaka-Jessore flight was cancelled and a Singapore-bound plane was late by a few hours.

As picketing was almost absence in the afternoon, city dwellers came out of their residences in larger numbers. The number of vehicles also increased by then.

According to police and witnesses, Nurul Haq, a leader of AL-backed Jatiya Rickshaw Sramik League, was killed when snipers threw three bombs on a procession near the Shapla Square at Motijheel Commercial Area at about 1:30 am. The bombs, thrown reportedly from atop a Janata Bank building, also hurt eight other processionists campaigning against the shutdown.

A procession carrying Haq's body was brought out in the city demanding trial of the killers.

The second death occurred at Gournadi, Barisal, in front of the Islamic Mission Office at 10:30am. Nasir, 28, died on the spot when a crude bomb he was making exploded, said UNB news agency. He was identified as a BNP activist.

Several bombs were also hurled from the Pir Yemeni Market in the capital's Gulistan area at around noon on a pro-AL Chhatra League procession. At least 10 persons were injured in the incident. Police arrested one Shah Alam from inside the shopping centre in connection with the attack.

In protest, the office of the showowners' association in the market was ransacked. The leader of association was known to be a BNP man.

Bombs were also hurled at BRTC buses near the Shishu Park and the High Court, at a rickshaw at Shahbagh, on streets at Kalyanpur, Fulbaria, Gulistan, Dolaiparah and Mirpur. Explosions of bombs during the production process were reported from Mirpur.

A BRTC bus caught fire at Agargaon from a petrol bomb. But none was injured in the incident.

Bombs were also thrown on

First Hajj flight leaves

The inaugural Hajj flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines with 301 pilgrims aboard left Dhaka last night for Jeddah, reports BSS.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Engineer Mosharraf Hossain and State Minister for Religious Affairs Moulana Nurul Islam saw the Hajj pilgrims off at the Zia International Airport.

a tempo at Jatrabari and another on a police van at Paltan crossing. The Paltan incident left a detective policeman hurt.

A tempo driver sustained serious burn injuries when some pro-hartal activists set his vehicle on fire at Khilkhet Bazar in the morning.

Police and BNP workers clashed for some half an hour in front of the party's Naya Paltan central office after several bombs were hurled at a police van allegedly from the party office. The explosions injured four policemen who were taken to police hospital.

Police lobbed teargas shells and chased the BNP leaders and workers into the party office which they guarded until evening. Police picked up several of them as they came out of the BNP office.

In Khulna, six persons were injured in gunshots and bomb explosions during clashes between the pro- and anti-hartal activists.

In Rajshahi, clashes between the rival groups left 30 people including eight policemen.

In Khagrachhari, some 15 were reported hurt.

In Khulna, six were injured in similar clashes. Police action against the pickets was also reported from Magura.

## 3 heads of state

From Page 1

D-8 summit. He would be on a scheduled tour of some European countries. Amre Moua, foreign minister of Egypt would lead his country's delegation to Dhaka.

Nigeria has not yet confirmed the name of the leader of the delegation. The country would be going to polls on the 25th of this month.

The D-8 summit was originally scheduled to be held on November 28-29 but was postponed due to floods. The sources said that the government should have proceeded with the original date since a rescheduling creates lot of problems for foreign leaders in revising their programme.

It was learnt that all the D-8 leaders had given consent about their participation when the date was first set for November.

## Chamber chiefs

From Page 1

sured us that he will offer a fresh date for a meeting with the business leaders," said Mintoo.

However, if the political atmosphere does not ultimately soothe itself they will have no recourse but to approach the political parties directly, said DCCI president M H Rahman, echoing his colleagues.

They said a dialogue will be initiated among conflicting camps and a decisive settlement of disputes shall be sought.

But the leaders hope that such an event would come about without intervention from the business community.

Meanwhile, the government has been asked to compensate for losses of production and work time during the strikes, said Rahman.

Exact statistics concerning production losses will be made public after the hartal, promised MCCI chief Mahbub Jamil.

Foreign trade has distinguished itself as a leading casualty of political unrest as all trading activities freeze during hartal hours, they pointed out.

"Many garments and knitwear factories will have to close this year as they will fail to meet with shipping deadlines and consequently be unable to avail new export orders," said Monjurul Haque, president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

He said that fresh political unrest would exacerbate sufferings caused by prolonged floods and the 155 days of hartal during the BNP regime.

He joined others in urging the political leaders to resolve all disputes in a constructive manner.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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