



Children performing at a function celebrating the 12th anniversary of a handwriting competition introduced by Karak Natya Sampradaya in 1987. The day-long programme was held at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday. —Star photo

## Weather

### Dry weather forecast

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partially cloudy sky over the country till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country. Met Office forecast.

The country's highest temperature was recorded 35.7 degrees Celsius yesterday at Dhaka and the lowest 15.4 degrees at Sirimangal.

The sun sets today at 6 pm and rises tomorrow at 6.22 am. Maximum and minimum temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	35.7	19.6	75	50
Chittagong	33.1	19.4	82	64
Rajshahi	34.3	18.0	72	65
Khulna	34.2	21.0	98	54
Barisal	34.8	19.8	70	61
Sylhet	34.5	19.0	63	50
Cox's Bazar	33.5	20.5	75	63

### Pourashava polls

#### Zillur hails participants

Awami League General Secretary and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman yesterday congratulated the people of the country for spontaneously participating in the pourashava polls despite obstacles from former 'autocrats', vote dacoits and raskars, reports BSS.

In a statement, Zillur said the massive turnout in the elections was a proof of people's awareness about their voting rights.

"No conspiracy can stand before the unity and awareness of the people," he said.

The minister also praised the officials and employees involved in the election process, the Election Commission, candidates, police, BDR, Ansars and the Army for their help in holding the elections in a free, fair and peaceful manner.

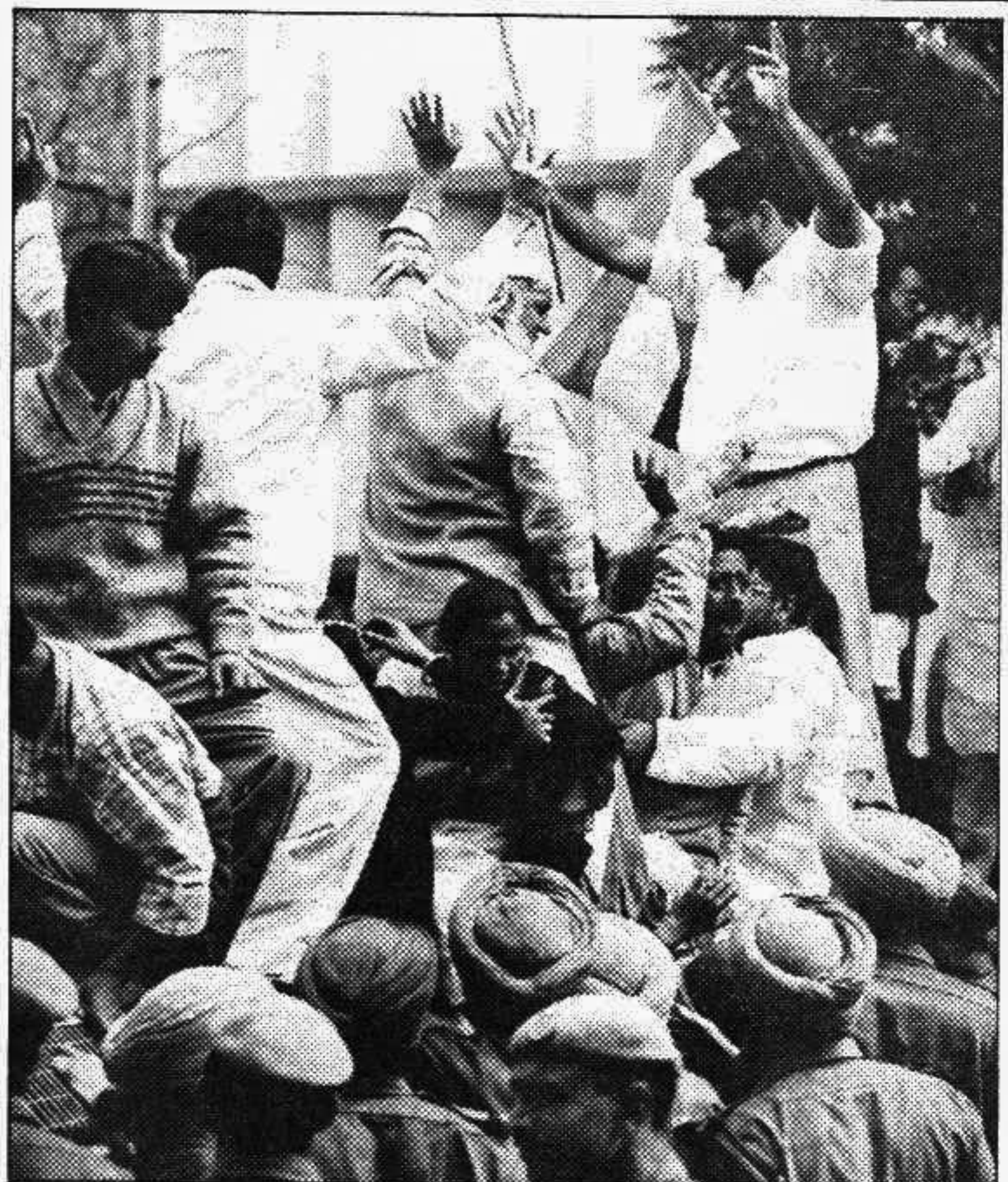
### PARC Chairman in Calcutta

CALCUTTA, Feb 26: Public Administration Reforms Commission Chairman (PARC) ATM Shamsul Haque spent a busy day here today, reports BSS.

He met Dr Surya Kanta Misra, Minister-in-Charge of Land Reforms, Rural Development and Panchayat Department of West Bengal government this afternoon.

They exchanged views on matters of mutual interests. The West Bengal minister informed Haque of the measures, initiatives and programmes of his government for land reforms and rural development, said a press release.

Haque apprised Dr Misra of the steps taken by Bangladesh government to strengthen the local government system. Earlier in the morning, Haque visited the Administrative Training Institute in Calcutta.



India's opposition Congress Party supporters protesting near the Parliament yesterday against the inclusion of a holy Hindu district, Hardwar, into a proposed new state. The ruling Hindu nationalist government has vowed to carve out a hilly region of India's most populous state of Uttar Pradesh into a new state. —AFP photo

## China threatens to share missile technology with third countries

HONG KONG, Feb 26: China has made a "veiled threat" to share missile technology with third countries if the United States builds a missile defence shield for its Asian allies, including Taiwan, the Financial Times reported today, reports AFP.

A senior Chinese official said the installation of a US-backed Theatre Missile Defence (TMD) system in Asia would be a violation of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), which is intended to limit the spread of missile technology, the British newspaper reported. "Since the US can lead the way in breaking this regime other countries have an absolute right not to follow the rules of this regime and undertake cooperation on missiles and missile technology with third countries," the unnamed official was quoted as saying.

China fear as that a proposed TMD shield for Japan and

South Korea could also help Taiwan which it claims as a renegade province and has in the past threatened to invade if the nationalist government makes a formal declaration of independence.

The threat comes at a time of increasing friction between Beijing and Washington.

China reacted angrily this week to a US decision to block the sale of a hi-tech satellite to a Chinese-led consortium because of security fears, it warned this could affect trade and economic cooperation.

The United States has expressed concerns that China could supply missile technology to Pakistan, which is locked in a nuclear arms race with India. Reports have also linked China with missile sales to Iran.

US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright starts a visit to Beijing on Monday with security matters high on the list of topics to be discussed.

## Jordanians pledge loyalty to new king, pray for Hussein

AMMAN, Feb 26: About 1,000 Jordanians carrying candles walked slowly through Amman at nightfall Thursday to pay their respects at the hill-top tomb of King Hussein, reports AP.

Meanwhile, representatives of Jordan's one million labour unionists pledged allegiance to Hussein's eldest son, King Abdullah, in a move reflecting growing public confidence in the new monarch.

Hussein died of cancer on February 7.

The pledge of allegiance to Abdullah, 37, came in a letter issued Thursday at a meeting of 30 representatives of Jordan's 17 labour syndicates.

"On behalf of the one million labourers throughout the kingdom, I am honoured Your Majesty to pledge allegiance and sincere loyalty to your Hashemite throne," said the letter, signed by the syndicates' president Mazen Maayeh.

Such a call is crucial for Abdullah because it underlines

growing public confidence in the career soldier who has little political experience.

Abdullah spent the last 10 years as the commander of an elite army unit charged with internal security. He represented King Hussein in several state functions at home and abroad, but he had shown little ambition outside the army.

In the 5-km trek from Amman's Zuhra district to the royal compound, the candle marchers, mostly women and children in black, chanted: "There is no God, but one and Hussein is his loved one."

The march was organised by the Saudi-Jordanian Committee for Culture, but Jordanians from all walks of life joined it. Bedouin tribesmen in head-dresses and head-to-toe robes and others in jeans, T-shirts and baseball caps.

They marched across the black gates of the royal compound to the cemetery where loudspeakers broadcast verses from the Quran.

## Full-fledged TV station to be set up in Khulna

Khulna, Feb 26: A full-fledged television station will be set up here and work on the proposed station will begin soon, reports UNB.

This was disclosed by State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed while speaking at the annual general meeting of Khulna Journalists Union yesterday.

He said a technical team would come here within two weeks to prepare a complete report on the project.

Prof Sayeed said necessary funding for the project would be met locally if foreign funding is not available.

## UNICEF official due in city today

The Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF, Stephen Lewis, arrives in the city today to attend the two-day National Conference on Coordinated Action for Arsenic Mitigation, reports APB.

The conference, scheduled to begin at the LGED auditorium at 9am, will be inaugurated by LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman. Health and Family Welfare Minister Salah Uddin Yusuf will be special guest.

The LGRD and Cooperatives Ministry and Health and Family Welfare Ministry have organised the conference in cooperation with UNDP, UNICEF, WHO and World Bank.

## Baby strangled to death

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Feb 26: A 21-day child was strangled to death allegedly by a step-mother at village Dhalur Par under Jakiganj thana last night. Police arrested the step mother on charge of killing the baby.

Police said Sohana, the second wife of one Haris Ali, sent Begum, the first wife of Haris out of the house and took the boy from her at about 8 pm yesterday.

After some time, she strangled the child to instantaneous death. Later, Begum filed a case with the Jakiganj thana accusing Sohana of the planned murder.

The body was sent to the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital for post-mortem.

## Father kills daughter in Feni

FENI, Feb 26: A father has killed his three-year-old daughter at Tulatuli village under Sonagazi thana of the district, reports APB.

Fakir Ahmed took sleeping Marjina Begum, daughter from his first wife, to a solitary place at nearby Satbaria village at dawn on Monday and killed her, police said.

Villagers caught him as he was leaving the body on a road and handed him over to local police.

Police recovered the body and sent it to Sadar hospital for autopsy. The motive behind the killing could not be ascertained.

## Opposition files motion with Thai Senate to impeach Chuan Leekpai

BANGKOK, Feb 26: Following a failed censure vote last month, opposition leaders have filed a motion with the Thai Senate to impeach Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai and his interior minister, reports AP.

A similar motion has already been filed against Finance Minister Tarrin Nimanaheminda. Neither is expected to find the support of three-fifths of senators needed for impeachment.

The opposition accuses Chuan, Tarrin and Sanan Kachornprasert, the interior minister, variously of corruption, economic mismanagement and improper conduct in approving police institutions.

Impeachment is a new procedure for Thailand, part of constitutional reforms adopted in 1997 aimed at giving ordinary people and the parliamentary opposition a chance to remove corrupt officials.

Several politicians whom the constitution drafters had in mind are among those who filed Thursday's motion.

They were in government until driven out in 1997 by the economic crisis and replaced by Chuan, widely seen as the country's most honest politician.

## Filing of cases against Khoka condemned

Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal has strongly condemned the false cases filed against BNP City Convenor Sadek Hossain Khoka MP, reports UNB.

They demanded immediate withdrawal of cases against Khoka.

In a joint statement, president Abdullah Al Noman and general secretary Nazrul Islam Khan of Sramik Dal also condemned the killing of Rikshaw Sramik leader Nurul Haq.

In another statement they criticised the government for the arrest of BNP women leaders Selima Rahman, Rabeya Siraj Shirin Sultana, and Laila Begum.

## Death anniversary of 2 DU students tomorrow

Different political, student and socio-cultural organisations will observe the 15th death anniversary of Ibrahim Selim and Delwar tomorrow in a befitting manner, a press release of Shaheed Selim Trust said yesterday, reports BSS.

The two resident students of Dhaka University embraced martyrdom in the movement against the autocratic rule of General Ershad on the day in 1984. The students were run over by a police vehicle at Phulbaria of the city when they were in a procession of the then Chhatra Sangram Parishad.

The day will be observed through placing wreaths at the memorial plaques in front of Surya Sen Hall and Sergeant Jahurul Huq Hall of the university, discussions and *doa mahfils*. Shaheed Selim Trust will also feed the destitute at the village homes of the slain students, the press release said.

## George Bush Jr to confirm his presidential ambitions

AUSTIN, Texas, Feb 26: After fending off questions for months about his presidential ambitions, Gov George W Bush said Thursday he will announce his White House intentions in two weeks, reports AP.

Bush Jr was coy with reporters, although all signs pointed toward a candidacy for the Texas governor, who leads many Republican presidential polls.

"In two weeks, I'll make an announcement. So I'll see you in two weeks," Bush said at a news conference. Asked what he had decided, he replied: "If I told you what I'd announce, you wouldn't even show up."

A senior adviser to Bush said he would form an exploratory committee at that time. The adviser said Bush would not formally announce a candidacy for several weeks or months, and he cautioned that Bush could still opt out although he is already building a campaign team.

Two other advisers said they had been told to prepare for the formation of a campaign exploratory committee.

## BFUJ, DUJ protest comments of political parties

Leaders of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) yesterday strongly protested the comments made by some political quarters alleging that journalists did not cover the just-concluded pourashaba elections objectively and gave exaggerated figures of the voter turnout, reports BSS.

In a joint statement, BFUJ president Abul Kalam Azad and secretary general Akhter Ahmed Khan and DUJ acting president Shuva Rahman and general secretary Azizul Islam Bhuiyan said the journalists are pledge-bound to project objective pictures of the happenings upholding the code of ethics of the profession, it said.

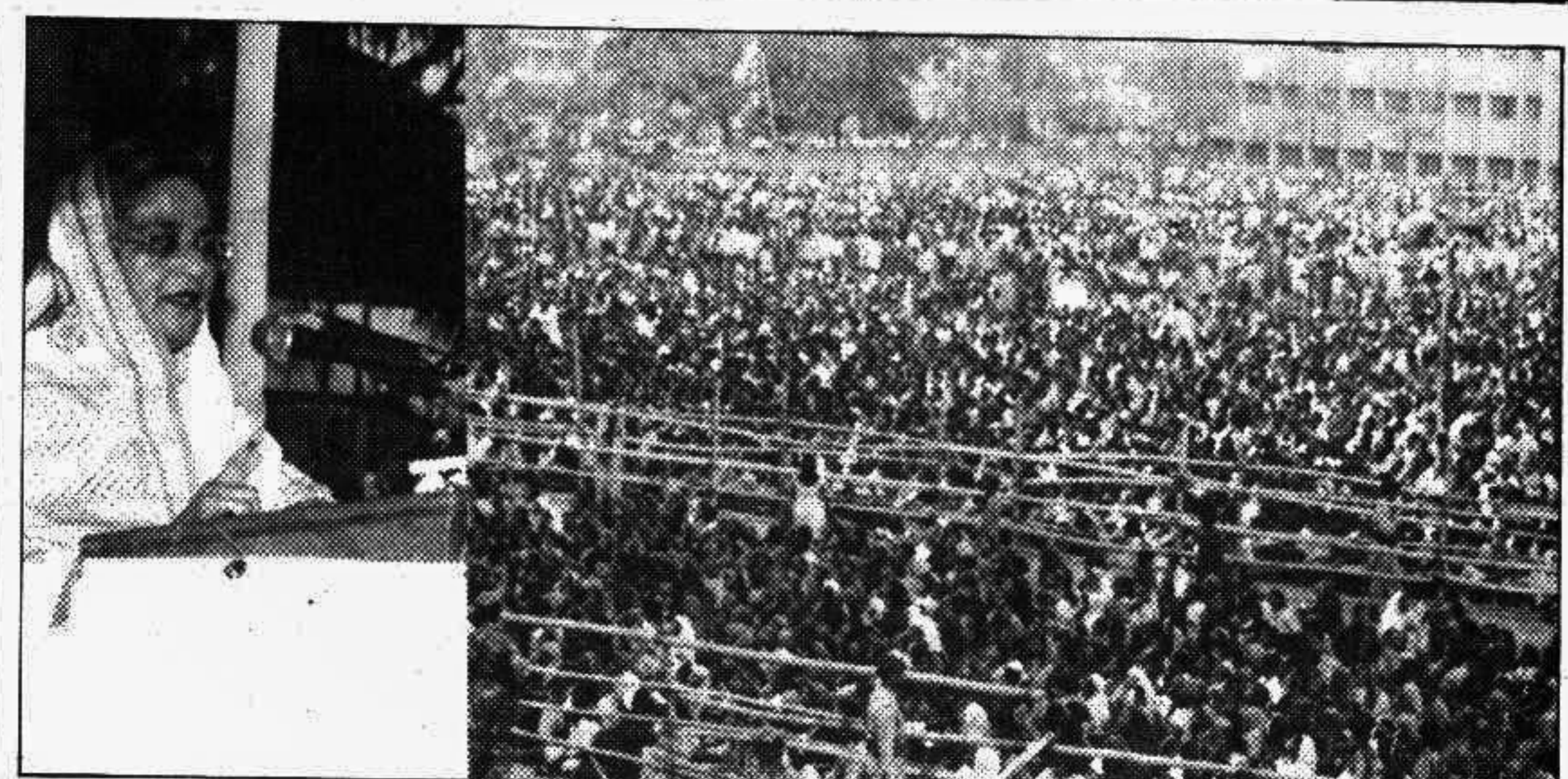
The statement said: Journalists are not rivals or adversaries to the government or any political party. They have to write the fact in the greater interest of the nation even if it sounds unpleasant to some quarters.

The leaders of the community said the journalists had no scope to conceal the spontaneity and massive turnout of the voters in the poura polls neither through their reports nor pictures, and there was no necessity of doing so.

The leaders said: The journalists have nothing to do if their objective reporting does not serve the purpose of any quarters as they discharge their responsibilities upholding professional honesty and conscience and not serving the cause of any political party or ideology.

The journalist leaders called upon the concerned quarters to refrain from shifting the responsibility of their failures to the journalist community.

They urged all to extend all-out cooperation so that the journalists could discharge their professional responsibilities without any hindrance even under the tense political situation.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing a public meeting at Mohammadpur Physical College ground in the city yesterday. —PID photo

## Tofail warns against erosion of values among youths

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed has called upon guardians to take a firm stand against erosion of values among the younger generation, reports APB.

Citing some examples, he warned the parents that students of present day were very prone to violence, crimes and drug addiction which were eating into the vitals of the society. Addressing the prize giving ceremony of annual sports competition at Uttara High School yesterday, Tofail said guardians must take the responsibility to rearing their wards as honest and worthy citizens.

Presided over by Golam Sarwar, President of the Managing Committee of the school and the News Editor of Dainik Ittefaq, the function was addressed, among others, by AKM Rahmatullah, MP, and Headmaster of the school Moazzem Hossain Bhuiyan.

He referred to the highest allocation for the education sector, and said the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was pledge-bound to ensure education for all within the next decade.

Recalling the glorious past of the student movements in the country, Tofail, who was a leading figure of the historic 11-point movement in 1969, urged the students to follow the footsteps of their predecessors.

## Cases against 3 fertiliser dealers filed

SIRAJGANJ, Feb 26: Sirajganj district administration has seized five truckloads of fertiliser worth Tk two lakh and filed cases against three dealers for irregular lifting of fertiliser from Jamuna Fertiliser Factory, reports APB.

Official sources said that irregular lifting caused an artificial crisis and hike of fertiliser prices in the northern districts including Sirajganj.

A 50 kg bag of urea now sells at Tk 370 to Tk 380 in the market against the official price of Tk 240, farmers said.

In view of its sharp price rise over the last 10 days, the Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) of Sirajganj has asked the dealers to lift their quotas within 24 hours.

Some dealers, however, told APB that they were finding it difficult to lift their quotas due to various complications, even after depositing the money.

## People's unity to eliminate terrorists urged

Speakers at a protest rally in the city yesterday urged the people to forge unity to eliminate terrorists and reactionary forces to avenge the killing of Liberation War veteran and progressive leader Kazi Aref Ahmed, reports BSS.

Organised by the freedom fighters of Mirpur area, the speakers at the rally said Kazi Aref fought for the independence of the country and took part in all progressive movements for the socio-economic freedom of the people.

They said although the anti-people forces succeeded in their assassination plot, no conspiracy can face the unity of the people.

Syed Hasan Imam, former chairman of Muktiyoddha Sangsad Abdul Matin, convenor of Muktiyoddha Chhatra Command Kamal Pasha Chowdhury, member-secretary Afzal Hussain and freedom fighter Amir Hossain Mollah, among others, spoke on the occasion.

## One found dead inside cinema hall

TANGAIL, Feb 26: A young machine operator of a cinema hall at Bhuapur was found dead with injury marks in his head, reports UNB.

Police recovered the body of the victim, identified as Zahur Haq, 17, of Kutubpur village, from inside the auditorium of Kajal Cinema Hall at the thana headquarters.

Local people suspected that Zahur, who campaigned for the newly elected Pourashava Chairman of Bhuapur Amirul Islam Talukdar Biddut, was killed as a sequel of feud between rival parties.

A case has been lodged with the local police in this connection, but no arrest was made so far.

## 'Govt planning to upgrade Cancer Institute to 300 beds'

Health and Family Welfare Minister Salahuddin Yusuf yesterday said the government is actively considering a proposal for upgrading the Bangladesh Cancer Institute and Hospital to a 300-bed hospital, reports BSS.

"Prevention of cancer is better than cure," he said while addressing a seminar organised by JICA Alumni Association, Bangladesh for creating awareness among the people to prevent cancer in Bangladesh at BIRDEM auditorium here.

Presided over by president of JICA Alumni Association, Bangladesh Prof Dr Motiur Rahman, eminent cancer specialist Syed Fazlul Haq and Begum Tasmina Hossain, MP, presented the keynote papers. The seminar was addressed, among others, by Secretary General of the organization Ajmol Chowdhury and Resident Representative of JICA-Bangladesh Yuji Okajaki.

Health Minister said the country's doctors trained by JICA on cancer treatment would be able to contribute to cancer operation and radiotherapy of the patients.

He called upon the doctors working in different non-government organisations to come forward side by side the government for ensuring necessary medical facilities to the people of the country.

## Five killed in road accidents

Five people were killed and 17 others injured in separate road accidents in Narsingdi and Faridpur yesterday, report agencies.

APB reports: Three people were killed and 15 others injured in a bus-tempo collision on Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Narsingdi yesterday.

Police said a Bhairab-bound bus collided with a tempo at Shilmandi in sadar thana, leaving the driver and two other unidentified passengers of the three-wheeler dead on the spot.

Police identified the tempo driver as Khorshed Alam, 32. The injured passengers, 10 of the bus and five of the tempo, were admitted to Narsingdi Sadar Hospital.

The bodies were sent to the Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

In Faridpur, two people were killed and two others injured when a truck smashed a rickshaw van at Munshibazar on Faridpur-Khulna highway yesterday, according to UNB.

Police said the rice-laden truck hit the van at about 6 pm killing Taibul Islam, 60, and Obaydul Islam, 25, on the spot.

Seriously injured Mohammad Rashid and Akbar Hossain, van driver, were admitted to Faridpur Medical Hospital.

Police seized the truck but the driver managed to escape.

## Complaint filed against fake NGO in Noakhali

NOAKHALI, Feb 26: Some People of 16 thanas in greater Noakhali have filed a complaint with the higher authorities against an NGO which cheated them in the name of providing jobs, reports UNB.

The written complaint was filed with the DG of Anti-Corruption Bureau, NGO Bureau and Social Welfare Department and the Home Minister against the 'Patriot Society' of 25 Shamsuzzohra Market, Bangla Motor, Dhaka.

In the complaint said that the NGO advertised in the national dailies for appointments to a health project and collected money from the applicants as "interview fee."

Later, they appointed thana coordinators from selected applicants against security money of Tk 5,000 per person. The NGO imposed a condition on the thana coordinators for collecting applications from at least 33 people for the posts of field workers at union level.

Accordingly, the field workers were appointed with a monthly salary of Tk 1,500 each against security money of Tk 3,000 to Tk 4,000.

After training, the field workers were sent to their respective areas in Noakhali, Feni and Laxmipur districts for selling health cards to poor families at a price of Tk 20 each. The organisation promised to provide health services to the cardholders at a charge for a year.

However, the organisation closed its activities secretly in different thanas after selling hundreds of cards to the poor people.

The deceived people in their complaint sought redress for their losses due to the incident.

When contacted, a former employee of the NGO, Shoaib Ahmed of Feni, said that the organisation was not registered with the NGO Bureau of the Social Welfare Department.

He said it used a fake registration number as a joint stock company and collected lakhs of Taka from across the country. He resigned from his post when he came to know of these facts, Shoaib said.

## Diabetes Awareness Day tomorrow

Bangladesh Diabetic Society will observe the "Diabetes Awareness Day" across the country tomorrow, reports BSS.

Forty units of the society all over the country and other organisations have drawn up different programmes to mark the day.

The diabetic society will hold a discussion in the BIRDEM auditorium, Shahbagh, on the day at 4 pm.

Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria is expected to attend the discussion as chief guest. Society president Prof Wahid Uddin Ahmed will preside.



As part of celebration of poet Nazrul's birth centenary, Ferdous Ara, a renowned artiste, rendering songs at a function on the Bangla Academy premises yesterday. —Star photo