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## Opposition calls 8-hr hartal on Sunday

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance has called for an eight-hour nationwide hartal on Sunday protesting the killing of three BNP workers in Narayanganj yesterday allegedly by ruling party activists.

He said that one BNP worker died on the spot while two others succumbed to injuries after being admitted to hospital. He mentioned the names of the deceased as Ibrahim, Hafiz and Shaheen.

He claimed all of them to be BNP workers.

The hartal will be observed from 6 am to 2 pm.

The alliance has also announced three day protest

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## Salam Talukdar still in coma

By Staff Correspondent

BNP leader Salam Talukdar, who was admitted to the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) on Sunday evening, is still in a critical condition, hospital sources said.

The Director of NICVD Professor M A Zaman, when contacted yesterday evening, told The Daily Star, "Talukdar's condition further deteriorated Wednesday as his breathing problems worsened."

Professor Zaman said, "The stimuli is not up to one expectation and his heart beat is not regular but we are giving medication to bring it to normal."

Professor Zaman also said, "Talukdar is on ventilator. He often breathes on his own but requires breathing aide (ventilator) most of the time which is automatically turned on."

His blood pressure had dropped last night but it is now under control.

Salam Talukdar also former secretary general of BNP is still in coma in the Intensive Care Unit of the hospital.

## Inside Today

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#### The Speaker Should Not Behave Like a Defence Lawyer

by A R Shamsul Islam

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### Business

Polish imports from Bangladesh surge 60pc in '97-98

US unlikely to go for major interest rate hike

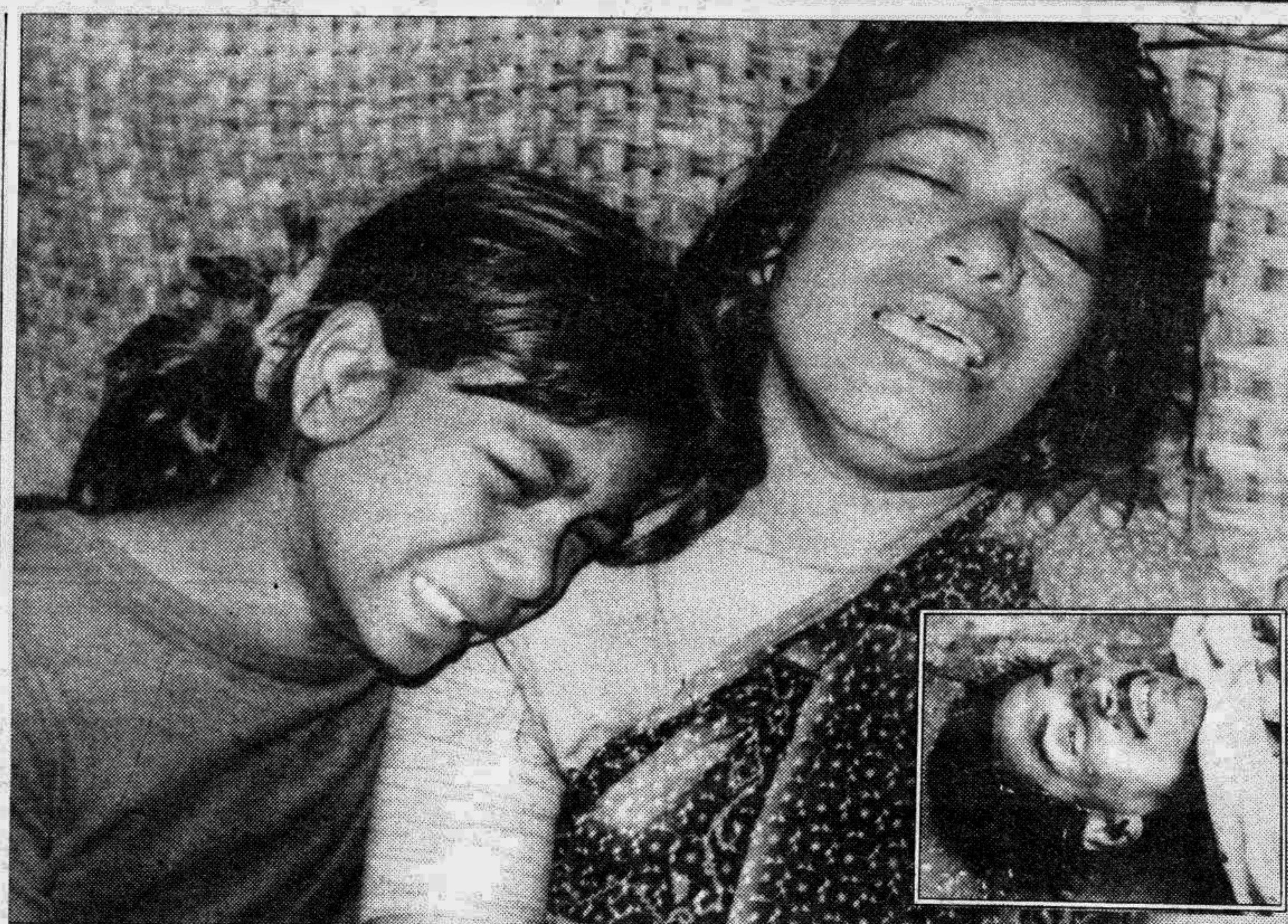
DSE, CSE price quotations Pages 8, 9 & 10

### Prayer Timings

August 19

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:10	4:15
John	12:50	1:25
Asr	5:00	5:10
Maghrib	6:40	6:45
Esha	8:00	8:30

Source: Islamic Foundation



Wife and daughter wail after death of Ibrahim at Narayanganj yesterday. Inset: The deceased.

—Star photo

## Violence during opposition programme One killed, 50 hurt in Narayanganj

By Staff Correspondent

Unidentified gunmen sprayed bullets on a group of BNP activists in Narayanganj, killing at least one and leaving 50 others wounded, as they were preparing to lay siege to the deputy commissioner's office yesterday as part of a nationwide anti-government campaign.

The dead was identified as Ibrahim, a 35-year-old Judo Dal activist.

BNP led opposition alliance reacted with an eight-hour hartal on Sunday and nationwide demonstrations today protesting the violence. The alliance claimed three people were killed and charged the ruling party goons with the murders.

Trouble also broke out at Barisal where BNP demonstrators were chased by ruling party supporters trying to foil their march.

There was also violence in Dhaka city when unidentified

people used guns, home-made bombs and brickbats to thwart demonstrators. The attackers allegedly operated from a rooftop guarded by police at Roy Saheb Bazar crossing. The procession at that point was reportedly stopped by police on way of DC's office.

At least 50 others were injured in the subsequent violence, in which Daily Star photo-journalist Amran Hossain was also hurt. Amran received plastic bullets on his face and body after police fired on the angry BNP supporters who were retaliating with rocks and bombs.

In Narayanganj, Ibrahim (who later died) and 50 others were wounded including 20 with gunshots when a group of armed terrorists opened fire on a BNP gathering, which was preparing

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## Measures to rehabilitate slum dwellers

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday announced a series of measures for rehabilitation of the slum dwellers in their respective village homes, report agencies.

Each family intending to return to their village will be provided with travel expenses, three months' free food support under VGF programme and micro credit facilities through various institutions and agencies of the government.

The Prime Minister announced the programmes while addressing first meeting of the recently constituted slum dwellers rehabilitation committee.

The meeting held at her office was attended by Home, Post and Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasrin, Housing and Public Works Minister Engineer Mosharraf Hossain, Minister for Social Welfare Dr Mohammad Hossain, State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Talukder Abdul Khalek, Cabinet Secretary, Principal Secretary to the

Prime Minister and other secretaries and high officials.

The Prime Minister referred to the government's massive programme for providing shelter and employment in the rural areas and said, we are working to ensure home for the homeless and better living for the people.

The slum dwellers are leading a subhuman life in the city slums and are being exploited by a section of people, she said, adding that some people are using the city slums as haven for crimes.

Government wants to rescue the innocent slum dwellers from this subhuman life and ensure a better and healthy living condition for them in the rural areas," she added.

The Prime Minister said the government is running the Arayyan project for the homeless, housing project for the low-income group people, Adarsha Gram (ideal village) project and providing loan and training for the rehabilitation of the poor.

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## Turkish quake 3500 killed, thousands still missing

ISTANBUL Aug 18: The death toll from one of the century's strongest earthquakes neared 3,500 today as disaster relief teams from around the world joined overwhelmed Turkish crew facing a deepening humanitarian crisis, reports AP.

At least 3,479 people were killed and nearly 17,000 injured in Tuesday's 7.4 magnitude quake, which left an arc of destruction from Istanbul to the Golcuk area about 130 kilometers southeast, according to a special crisis office headed by Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit.

The outpouring of international assistance is certain to accelerate the work among the toppled buildings and homes. But the outside teams may also face frustrating logistical problems of reaching remote villages and squall Istanbul shantytowns before all hope of finding survivors disappears.

"Who is helping us?" cried an old woman standing before a toppled home where she said neighbours and family members were buried.

Meanwhile, another potential disaster flared among the

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food cell set up at Chittagong port will be abolished after completion of withdrawal of Army from the port tomorrow morning, port sources said.

Army was deployed at Chittagong port on September 17 last year after formation of the food cell to expedite and supervise discharge of food items from the vessels.

About 500 Army and Navy personnel were deployed at Chittagong port in two phases.

In the first phase, Army personnel were deployed under food cell. In the second phase, they were placed at Chittagong port for security reasons, especially to keep watch at jetty gates. This was aimed at preventing pilferage, looting of

Kader Siddiqui meets Khaleda, Ershad

In a major move dissident ruling party leader Bangabir Kader Siddiqui MP yesterday met Khaleda Zia and HM Ershad, reports UNB.

He discussed with them his planned resignation from Parliament.

Kader Siddiqui told the news agency over telephone that he had one-to-one parleys with Khaleda at 29 Minto Road and Ershad at his Baridhara office.

"I had one-to-one discussion with them in a very cordial atmosphere. I informed them of my resignation from Parliament because I think I should inform the opposition leaders following the norms of politics," he said.

Siddiqui, suspended from Awami League on charge of anti-party activities, also told the BNP and JP leaders to take stand against the eviction of slum dwellers in the city.

In reply to a question, he

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## Army withdraws from Chittagong port today

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Aug 18: The food cell set up at Chittagong port will be abolished after completion of withdrawal of Army from the port tomorrow morning, port sources said.

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## Extortionists kill one in city

By Staff Correspondent

A young man was stabbed to death by unidentified extortionists at Maradia in city's Khilgaon area on Tuesday.

The dead was identified as Azim, 30, son of Rasul Box and a resident of Maradia area.

Few days ago the extortionists demanded toll from Azim at his laundry. But he refused to give toll, hospital sources said.

The gang again came on Tuesday and demanded toll at about 1:30 am. They started beating Azim when he refused to pay them toll. At one stage, they stabbed him in the chest.

Fatally injured Azim was rushed to the Chest Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries on Tuesday.

Azim's body was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for autopsy.

Brother of the victim Mostafa lodged a case with Khilgaon thana in this connection but none was arrested till filing of this report last night.

## No individual umrah visa

The Saudi Ambassador in Dhaka yesterday called on the State Minister for Religious Affairs and told him that individual Umrah visas would henceforth be discouraged, reports UNB.

"In future visas would be issued in group basis," Saudi Ambassador Abdullah Omar told State Minister for Religious Affairs Moulana M Nurul Islam.

The Ambassador emphasised on issuance of non-bankee Hajj visas to the pilgrims to be recommended by the government, especially by the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

The state minister assured him that all necessary help would be extended in the interest of hajis from Bangladesh, said an official handout.

## Evicted slum people 'take over' Osmany Udyan

By Shehab Ahmed

Osmany Udyan was 'invaded' yesterday by at least 5000 people who were evicted recently from different city slums.

"We would stay here until the government plans for rehabilitation is completed," Shahidur Rahman, identifying himself as president of the Bangladesh Bastuhara Samity, told The Daily Star yesterday afternoon. His 'troops' took over the park's wooded section earmarked for the convention site of the NAM conference in June 2001.

A banner of the Samity showed its address at 23 Bangabandhu Avenue which also houses the central office of the governing Awami League and its affiliates.

Zohra, a mother of four children who lost her bamboo hut to bulldozers at Kamalapur slum on August 3, said she has been relieved to find a place at the shaded park. She is planning to raise her shanty, she said.

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## EC extends time for 2 BNP MPs

By Staff Correspondent

The Election Commission has extended the deadline for the two BNP legislators to explain their position in the controversial floor crossing case against the party decision.

Since then, the BNP has been claiming that the two MPs' conduct amounted to violation of the Constitutional provision that bars floor crossing, and thereby they should lose their seats in parliament. But the MPs have been claiming that they did not violate the Constitution, as neither did they resign from the BNP nor vote against the party.

However, Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury referred the disputed matter to the Election Commission on August 8. The Speaker referred the case only after the Supreme Court had asked him to do so.

The Commission had asked the parties concerned on August 10 to put forward their respective arguments in a week from the date of receipt of the one-week time.

But the two MPs separately wrote to the EC on August 16 seeking one month time to prepare for legal arguments.

The three-member Commission yesterday decided to extend the deadline for them up to 24th of this month.

EC Additional Secretary Aziz Ahmed Chowdhury said, "The Commission would decide the date for hearing on the case after the fresh deadline is over."

Two BNP lawmakers, Mohammad Alauddin and Hasibur

Rahman Swapan, had joined the government of Awami League in February last year against the party decision.

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