

What's on today . . .

National workshop: USC Canada-Bangladesh in association with Adolescent Development Forum-Bangladesh will hold the 2nd day of a 4-day long national workshop on 'Adolescent development and Gender'. Venue: LGED conference room, 3rd floor auditorium, Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. Time: 9:00 am.

Inauguration: Daffodil Institute of Technology will inaugurate a cyber cafe. Venue: Daffodil Institute of Information Technology. Time: 11:00 am.

Film show: Swaborni will screen 4 movies on the third day of its Millennium Films show. The movies are *The Saint*, *The Matrix*, *Baby's Day Out*, *Sleeping with the Enemy*. Venue: The Public Library auditorium. Time: 10:00 am, 2:30 pm, 5:30 pm, and 7:15 pm.

Gathering: SOS Children's Village will hold an 'Employers Gathering' in observance of its golden jubilee celebrations. Chief guest: Abdul Awal Mintoo, FBCCI president. Venue: SOS auditorium, 1 Shyamoli, Mirpur Road. Time: 4:00 pm.

Exhibition: The first solo painting exhibition of Hossain Muhammad Faruk will be inaugurated. Venue: Zainul Art Gallery, Institute of Fine Arts, DU campus. Time: 5:00 pm.

Meeting: An emergency meeting of the Bangabandhu Parishad city unit will be held. Venue: Parishad premises at Gha 118, School road, Mohakhali. Time: .00 pm.

World Mental Health Day '99: World Mental Health Day '99 will be observed. Organisers: Bangladesh Psychological Association (BPA), Bangladesh Institute of Psychological Services and Research (BIPSR) and South Asian Association of Psychologists (SAAP). Venue: BIPSR premises at 38 Green Road. Time: 6:00 pm.

..... and tomorrow

National workshop: USC Canada-Bangladesh in association with Adolescent Development Forum-Bangladesh will hold the 3rd day of a 4-day long national workshop on 'Adolescent development and Gender'. Venue: VHSS/USCC-B compound, Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. Time: 9:00 am.

Film show: Swaborni will screen 4 movies on the third day of its Millennium Films show. The movies are *The Fugitive*, *Pretty Woman*, *The Mummy* and *Armageddon*. Venue: The Public Library auditorium. Time: 10:00 am, 1:00 pm, 4:00 pm, and 6:30 pm.

Discussion meeting: Bangladesh-China Friendship Centre will hold a discussion meeting followed by a cultural show in observance of the golden jubilee of the founding of the People's Republic of China. Venue: Shishu Academy premises. Time: 4:00 pm.

Film show: Tanvir Mokammel's *Chitra Nadir Pare* will be screened. Venue: Russian Cultural Centre, House no 510, Road no 7, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 3:00 pm, 5:00 pm and 7:00 pm.

Weather

Light rain forecast

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers with temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Khulna and Sylhet divisions till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

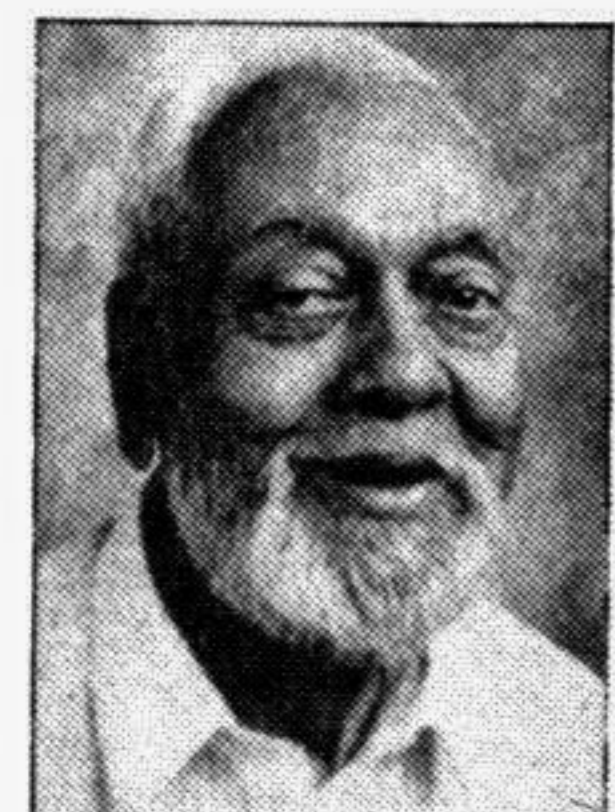
Met Office said day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period.

The country's highest temperature 34.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday in Dhaka and Jessore and the lowest 23.2 degrees at Sylhet and Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:37 pm and rises on Monday at 5:54 am.

Maximum and minimum temperatures and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	34.0	26.2	80	79
Chittagong	29.0	25.2	95	90
Rajshahi	32.4	24.6	83	85
Khulna	32.2	25.5	80	-
Barisal	32.2	25.0	83	100
Sylhet	30.9	23.2	89	89
Cox's Bazar	29.5	23.8	96	92



CJ to attend confce in South Africa

Chief Justice Mostafa Kamal yesterday left city for South Africa to attend the 9th International Anti-Corruption Conference in Dublin, reports UNB.

He is expected to return home on October 17.

Talk on energy, environment at IIT tomorrow

A talk on 'Energy and Environment in Developing Country Context' will be held tomorrow at 3 pm at the auditorium of Islamic Institute of Technology (IIT), Board Bazar, Gazipur, says a press release.

Dr Bilqis Amin Hoque, Head of Environmental Health Programme, ICDDR, B and Coordinator, GEMA and GARNET, SA, Mohakhali will present the talk while Dr M Anwar Hossain, DG of IIT will inaugurate the programme.

The presentation will include air pollution, water pollution and sanitation problems in developing countries like Bangladesh.

Energy and environment experts are likely to attend the session as designated discussants and audience.

GSS-run schools Pupils urge govt to ensure their right to edn

Hundreds of children from different schools of Gono Shahajia Sangstha (GSS) yesterday urged the government to ensure their right to education, reports BSS.

The children at a rally at the Central Shaheed Minar expressed grave concern over fund crisis of GSS for which they blamed the evil forces inside and outside the organisation.

The teachers and children of the GSS sponsored schools also brought out procession in the city to press home their demands. The procession started from Engineers Institute and ended at Central Shaheed Minar after parading different city streets.

Representatives of different social and cultural organisations and eminent personalities of the country joined the rally to express their solidarity with the pupils and teachers of GSS run schools and urged the government to solve the problem to ensure their right to education and smooth running of the schools.



Bibi Russel named UNESCO special envoy

Renowned designer Bibi Russel has been named 'UNESCO Special Envoy: Designer for Development', reports UNB.

UNESCO Director General Federico Mayor announced the name in recognition of Bibi Russel's commitment to welfare of weavers of Bangladesh and her devotion to the promotion of traditional crafts in the cause of human dignity, development and eradication of poverty, said a UNESCO press release here today.

Her nomination came on Monday during a 10-day event that took place at the UNESCO headquarters to promote traditional African weaving, it added.

It said Bibi Russel has been helping Bangladesh's traditional handloom weavers gain international exposure and find new markets by using their production in her own fashion designs.

She has also been active in UNESCO's Fashion for Development Programme that supports traditional crafts and helps draw on their economic potential.

Bill Gates Sr visits BRAC schools

Bill Gates Sr, Chairman and Chief Executive of 'Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation' visited two BRAC schools in Matlab area of Chandpur Friday, says a press release.

Currently on a visit to Bangladesh, Gates saw with great interest the system of teaching through participatory method and freely talked to the teachers and the students.

Earlier he had a briefing session on BRAC programmes of micro credit for income and employment generation, health and primary education with BRAC officials. Describing the people of Bangladesh as 'very friendly' he said, 'It is amazing. This is the only country which is so willing to change the status of women.'

It may be mentioned that his son Bill Gates Jr is the Chairman and Chief Executive of the world renowned Microsoft Corporation. He and his wife founded the 'Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation' that supports philanthropic institutions in the areas of global health and learning.

'Leasing Tanguar haor under active consideration of Land Ministry'

By Special Correspondent

The Land Ministry in a statement to The Daily Star on Wednesday said the 'issue of leasing the Tanguar haor is under active consideration of the ministry' to keep off illegal encroachments.

Arguing the decision to lease the 4,000 acre wetland the Land Ministry quoted a report by the deputy commissioner of Sunamganj that unless it is leased out soon before the monsoon water recedes it will be taken over by 'creating serious law and order situation'.

The ministry justified its decision saying that 'the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MOEF) had sought the opinion of the Land Ministry to enlist the haor as a Ramsar site which is a time consuming affair.'

But the 'deputy commissioner (Sunamganj) has reported that the monsoon water is receding fast increasing possibility of illegal fishing in the haor. Besides it would be difficult to call a tender at a short notice to lease it out and it would also be difficult to evict the illegal occupants,' the ministry said.

It gave a background detail of leasing process since 1985 and termination of it on February 16 this year. There had been court cases against it, one of them still pending before Sunamganj second sub-judges court.

On March 3 the district administration called for tenders for lease but no one responded in six calls. On the seventh call there were two bids. The highest bidder Nur Hossain offered Tk 63,73,183. But the district administration cancelled the bid due to a court injunction and sent the proposal to the ministry for further decision.

Rashed Mosharrif, State Minister for Land Ministry told The Daily Star on Wednesday night that he believes on principle that the haor should be declared as a sanctuary for flora and fauna.

Rich in 25 species of flora and fauna including 17 endangered species of fish and Pallas's Eagle (listed as a critically endangered bird by the IUCN), the haor has recently been declared as an Ecologically Critical Area forbidding indiscriminate fishing and hunting.

The wetland is also home to Bangladesh's only swamp forest that plays a critical role in the haor eco-system.



Visitors looking at children's paintings at an exhibition organised by ANZ Grindlays Bank in association with Zonta Club of Dhaka III at the bank's Gulshan Sales and Service Centre yesterday.

World Health Day today

The World Health Day will be observed in the country as elsewhere in the world today highlighting the theme of this year's observance 'mental health of the elderly,' reports BSS.

Elaborate programmes have been taken to observe the day under the auspices of the National Institute of Mental Health, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Bangladesh Association of Psychiatrists.

The inaugural function of the daylong programme will be held in the CIRDA auditorium in the morning. Health Minister Salahuddin Yusuf will open the function.

A symposium will be held on the mental health of the elderly at the end of the inaugural function.

A national workshop will be held in the second session of the programme. Resources persons from across the country will take part in the discussion on the Draft Mental Health Act, Bangladesh 1999.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in a message on the eve of the day expressed her belief that the observance of the day would catch greater attention of society in the development of mental and physical health of the elderly.

She said Awami League has introduced old age allowances for the elderly in the country.

'We have also set up the National Institute of Mental Health for the mental healthcare of the people,' the prime minister said.

The health minister in a message said the physically and mentally sound elderly could become the guardians of the youth and encourage them in nation-building activities.

State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Prof Dr M Amanullah in his message underlined the need for training to general physicians and health workers on mental health to ensure mental healthcare in the country.

Dhaka elected UNCP member

The United Nations General Assembly has unanimously elected Bangladesh as a member of the United Nations Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), reports BSS.

The UNGA also elected 19 other members to the committee on Friday, according to a press release of the Bangladesh permanent mission to the UN in New York.

The 20 countries elected from the Asia region include Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iran and Pakistan.

The CPC, comprising 34 members, is charged with reviewing and prioritising programmes undertaken by the UN under its medium-term plans.

Bangladesh's membership to the committee will give it more influence to adopt UN programmes and evaluation procedures.

JCD threatens stiff movement

By DU Correspondent

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student wing of opposition BNP, yesterday threatened to launch a vigorous movement in the country if the government failed to stop its repressive measures on the opposition activists.

JCD leaders sounded the warning at a rally on the Dhaka University campus protesting police attack on a JCD procession on Thursday and filing of false cases against the BNP and its front organisations.

Addressing the rally at *Aparajeya Bangla*, the JCD leaders urged the ruling Awami League to refrain from such activities for the sake of democracy.

Among others, JCD vice-president Monjur Elahi, Mosharrar Hossain and Manir Hossain addressed the rally which was followed by a procession.

1 killed, 10 hurt in road mishap in Habiganj

HABIGANJ, Oct 9: A passenger was killed and 10 others were seriously injured as a Sylhet-bound night coach from Dhaka skidded off the road near Narapat village in Chunarughat early hours of today, reports UNB.

Survivors said the coach fell into the ditch at about 3 am as the driver lost control over the steering.

The body of the unidentified man was recovered from inside the bus.

Different organisations blast Khulna bomb incident

Different socio-cultural and political organisations yesterday expressed deep concern over Friday's bomb blasts at a mosque at Khulna, reports BSS.

They also expressed concern with detection of bombs at a Mirpur mosque and the daily 'Janakantha Bhawan' at Eskaton Garden in the city.

General secretary of Bangladesh Workers Party Rasheed Khan Menon in a statement condemned the bombing of Ahmadiya Muslim Jamaat Mosque at Khulna and demanded exemplary punishment of the culprits.

Menon added the fundamental extremists in Bangladesh have launched Pakistani-style hate campaign against the said group. But unfortunately, he alleged, no government — past or present — took cognizance of the matter and the campaigners had gained inspiration in disseminating communal hatred.

Pirojpur AL committee calls on Hasina

The office-bearers and members of the newly-formed convening committee of Pirojpur district unit of Bangladesh Awami League called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office yesterday evening, reports BSS.

Led by convener of the committee Chandi Charan Paul and joint convenors Advocate Akram Hossain and Abdul Hakim, the committee apprised the prime minister of various organisational matters of the district.

Convening Committee members S S Halder, Minister of State for Jute A K Faezul Haq, Mahmuda Shaikat, MP, former BCL general secretary Ishaque Ali Khan Panna, Kazi Ruhia Begum Hasi, Adv Salam Talukder, former minister Motiur Rahman, Major (ret'd) Ziauddin, Pirojpur Municipality Chairman Mohammad Liatqat Ali Sheikh Badsha were, among others, present.

Meanwhile, noted social worker and leading businessman and Pirojpur District Bus and Mini-bus owners Association president Jashimuddin Khan and placards were brought to the meeting being imbued with the ideology of the party and dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Sheikh Hasina, who is also the President of Awami League called upon the members of the new convening committee to establish the organisation on firm footing. She urged them to organise the party at the grassroots level.

Ershad greets Vajpayee

Former President and Jatiya Party chairman H M Ershad has greeted Atal Behari Vajpayee on the victory of his party BJP-led National Democratic Alliance in the Indian general elections, reports UNB.

In a message yesterday Ershad hoped that India would have a stable government led by Vajpayee and the bilateral relations between the two countries would be improved.

He also hoped that the new Indian government would be keen in resolving the problems existing between the two neighbours.

Ershad wished continued peace, progress and prosperity of India and good health and long life of Atal Behari Vajpayee.

World Postal Day observed

The World Postal Day '99 was observed in a befitting manner across the country yesterday as elsewhere in the world, reports UNB.

President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in separate messages, congratulated all members of the Postal Department and hoped for a better prospect.

On the occasion, Bangladesh Postal Department made elaborate arrangements to mark the 125th anniversary of the World Postal Organisation.

Universal Postal Union Organisation was established at Berne in Switzerland on October 9, 1874.

A rally with colourful festoons and placards was brought out from the National Museum premises in the morning. It terminated at the Dhaka GPO premises.

Post and Telecommunication Minister Mohammad Nasim inaugurated the rally, participated by officials and employees of the Postal Department.

A discussion meeting was held at the Post Office auditorium, followed by a prize distribution ceremony to the best workers and winners of letter writing competition.

Prabeen mela postponed after fundamentalists' threat

PALASH, Narsingdi, Oct 9: The authorities have imposed ban on assembling of people at the Charnogudi union of Palash thana under the district tomorrow following a threat by a 'Prabeen Mela' to be organised by a local NGO, reports BSS.

Police said a section of fundamentalists called a protest rally at the same venue where the mela is supposed to be inaugurated by Meher Afroz Chumki, MP tomorrow.

The fundamentalists are protesting the holding of mela because it is being organised by a non-government organisation (NGO). It is a part of fundamentalists' movement to obstruct NGO activities in the area.

Sources at Resource Integration Centre (RIC), a local NGO organising the fair said that they had decided to postpone the fair because of the threat of fundamentalists to foil it.

Pak FM seeks to clear air over Afghan policy

ISLAMABAD, Oct 9: There is no change in Pakistan's supportive policy towards Afghanistan's ruling Taliban militia, Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz said in remarks published today, reports AFP.

The clarification followed a statement by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif about terrorists trained in Afghanistan-based camps fomenting sectarian violence that has claimed nearly 50 lives in Pakistan this month.

'If any objectionable activity is taking place within Afghanistan, it does not mean that it is happening with the approval of the Taliban government,' the Dawn newspaper quoted Aziz as saying.

He said many objectionable things were happening even in Pakistan without the consent of the government.

'We are not blaming Tal-

iban,' he said, referring to Sharif's statement. Thursday and to the expression of concern by interior minister Shujaat Hussain over the smuggling of drugs from Afghanistan through Pakistani territory.

He said the Taliban leadership had assured the 'fullest' support to Pakistan and promised to cooperate at all levels.

Afghanistan, being an unstable and unsettled country because of two decades of war, the Taliban did not have firm control, Aziz said.

'Since it is a difficult place to rule, it has become a haven for drug barons, terrorists and evil elements,' Aziz said, adding that their activities spilled over because of the government's loose control.

The Taliban regime controls more than 80 percent of Afghanistan with the remaining held by an opposition alliance. Pakistan recognises the Taliban and is considered a principal supporter of the Islamic militia.

Razzak underscores use of high quality seeds

SHARIATPUR, Oct 9: Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak today underscored the need for using modern technology in cultivation to double the food production and attain self-sufficiency, reports BSS.

'There is no alternative to use of modern technology in cultivation to increase the country's food production,' he said while inaugurating a training programme on 'cultivation of improved quality paddy' here.

Organised by Chhinstagar Irrigation Project, the function was addressed, among others, by Col (Retd) Showkat Ali, MP and former president of Bangladesh Chhatra League Enamul Huq Shamim.

Razzak said there has been a bumper food production in the country due to implementation of modern and pro-people agriculture policy. He called upon the farmers to use high quality seeds and modern cultivation technology in the future to increase production of foods.

Describing the successes of the three-year rule of Sheikh Hasina, Razzak said the government had successfully faced the devastating flood of 1998 and provided food assistance to two crore people through introduction of VGF cards. It [government] also signed Chittagong Hill Tracts peace agreement, Ganges water sharing treaty and re-excavate Goral river, he pointed out.

More than a dozen other Taliban troops and several civilians were also injured by the blast at Qulu-i-Ziny near the northern provincial capital of Mazar-i-Sharif, the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) said.

Explosion kills 7 Taliban soldiers

ISLAMABAD, Oct 9: At least seven Taliban soldiers were killed today when an explosion blew up a truck at a Taliban ammunition dump in northern Afghanistan, a private Afghan news service reported, says AFP.

The explosion occurred as ammunition and arms were being loaded onto the truck, the Pakistan-based agency said.

The blast caused a fire which took two hours to control, the agency said, adding a series of smaller explosions also occurred at the site.

AIP said Taliban sources confirmed the explosion but ruled out sabotage, attributing the blast to negligence during the ammunition loading.

Founding anniversary of Kachi Kanchar mela

Environment and Forest Minister Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury yesterday laid emphasis on united efforts to make the children as worthy citizens of the country to cope with the challenges of the next millennium, reports BSS.

'Children are the future of the country. So we should build them as worthy citizens of the country by forgetting all political differences,' she said while speaking at the 43rd founding anniversary of 'Kendrio Kachi Kanchar Mela' at the National Museum auditorium in the city.

Chaired by Dr Anisuzzaman, the function was addressed, among others, by Secretary to the Ministry of Water Resources Dr A T M Shamsul Huda, Director General of National Museum Shamsuzzaman Khan, Founder-Director of the organisation Roknuzzaman Khan, (Dada Bhai) and children representative Dilshad Sarmin. Laying emphasis on flourishing of children's talent in extra-curricular activities, the minister said our children are so talented and they are able to show their talent in different fields of arts, culture and sports.

She called upon all wealthy citizens of society along with the government to come forward for implementation of the UN charter on children right.

Dr Anisuzzaman called for expediting the activities of the organisation across the country as children can get the opportunity to involve themselves with the organisation.

Former member of the organisation and secretary to the Ministry of Water Resources Dr A T M Shamsul Huda said there is no alternative of such organisation to restore human relations.

Founder-Director of the Mela Roknuzzaman Khan (Dada Bhai) called upon the members of the organisation to build themselves as the worthy citizens of the country.

Blair convenes emergency meet on train crash

LONDON, Oct 9: British Prime Minister Tony Blair on today convened an emergency meeting at Downing Street to discuss the country's worst rail crash in 50 years amid mounting evidence of negligence by rail operators, reports AFP.

Meanwhile, search teams at the crash site, where a suburban train hit a high-speed train at full speed during Tuesday's rush hour, continued to sift through the blackened and charred wreckage for bodies.

Fire officials said that the charred ruins were some of the worst their rescue teams had ever seen.

Investigators late Friday recovered one train's front-end 'black box' data recorder which police described as more a 'vital piece of evidence' than the rear-end black box uncovered earlier this week.

Nazmul Karim memorial lecture held at DU

Leading litterateur Prof Anisuzzaman yesterday said freedom of expression is the pre-condition of democratic practice and if any sort of censorship is imposed on it, society will lose its dignity, reports BSS.

From the very beginning of human civilisation different pressure groups like churches and emperors imposed ban on free expression. In the modern age state mechanism tries to arrest the free voice through censorship,' he said.

He said this while presenting the keynote paper at the Nazmul Karim Memorial Lecture '99 on 'Intellectual Freedom in this Decade' at the Dhaka University campus.

Department of Sociology organised the programme in memory of the late Prof Abul Khair Nazmul Karim, who spent most of his time to establish sociology as a separate discipline in Bangladesh. The Department of Sociology of Dhaka University was established in July 1957 as a result of his relentless efforts.

Pro Vice-Chancellor Prof Shahada At-Allah addressed the lecture as the chief guest while Prof Prabodh Kumar Bhoomik of Anthropology Department of Calcutta University spoke as a special guest.

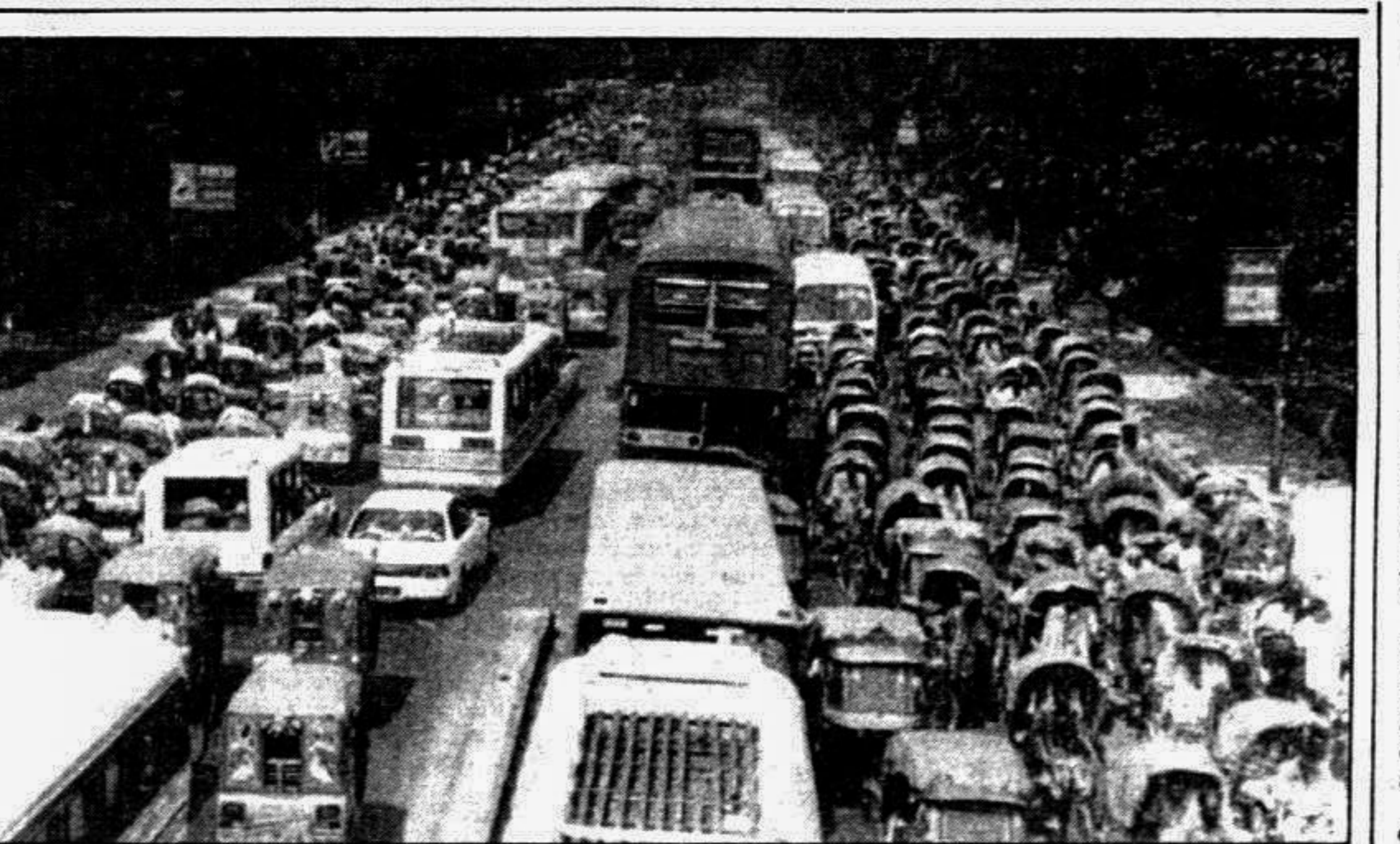
Road barricade in Bagerhat

BAGERHAT, Oct 9: Traffic movement on Bagerhat-Rupsha road was today disrupted for an hour as angry students of Khan Jahan Ali College put up a barricade on the road, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the students put up barricade on the road in front of the college at about 9 am after a student of the college was pushed down on the road from a bus by its helper. The injured student, Rabul Islam was admitted to a clinic.

Soon after the incident, the students of the college came out on the road and damaged a number of passing vehicles. At one stage, they put up the barricade, disrupting movement of all vehicles.

The barricade was withdrawn when leaders of transport workers assured them of action against the accused helper.



Traffic jams are no longer an unusual scene in the streets of the metropolis. This photo was taken from the city's Shahbagh area yesterday.