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3 senior army officers to retire soon

By Special Correspondent

Three senior army officers of the rank of Major General are due for retirement shortly, sources said.

They are Maj. Gen. A M Siraj of Artillery Corps, now Military Secretary to the President; Maj. Gen. Azizur Rahman, Area Commander, Chittagong, now Director General of BDR and Maj. Gen. Amsa Amin, now en-vo-ye to Jordan on deputation. Both Gen. Rahman and Gen. Amin belong to the Infantry Corps.

They are due for normal retirement shortly, the sources said.

Among the three, Maj. Gen. Siraj was given one year extension last year on recommendation of the "highest authorities".

Meanwhile, several officers have been listed for promotion to the rank of Major General. Their promotion will be given

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Afsar was held 'by mistake'

By Staff Correspondent

Police mistakenly arrested Afsar Ali in connection with planting of explosives in two city mosques and an anti-tank mine in the Jankantha office, recently, some top officials investigating the incidents admitted last night.

Afsar is a mason and he was working at a house in north Badda from where he was arrested.

When contacted, a top DMP official said arrested Afsar Ali is not the wanted person. Police is looking for a person having the name and he is from Ananda Nagar under Badda thana.

Soon after completion of investigation arrested Afsar Ali will be released, the official added.

Asked if they have any specific allegation against Afsar Ali from Ananda Nagar, he answered in the negative. He, however, said "The other Afsar Ali has been missing since the incidents".

Earlier, when produced in the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka on Monday, the arrested person was described by police as a BNP worker.

He was placed on a two-day remand. Police failed to get anything concrete regarding the charges brought against him during the two-day interrogation.

Tight security around Sectt, rly station

By Staff Correspondent

Security arrangements around the Bangladesh Secretariat, Zia International Airport (ZIA) and Kamalapur Railway Station have been beefed up following recovery of bombs at different parts of the city in recent days.

As part of security measures, 'metal detectors' have been introduced at the entry points of the secretariat and the ZIA since Tuesday last, officials said. Police patrolling around the ZIA premises have also begun for the last two days, they said.

Sufficient security personnel have been deployed around the Kamalapur railway station, although no metal detector has been put to use as yet, sources

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Prayer Timings

October 14		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:30	5:00
Zohr	12:45	1:20
Asr	4:15	4:30
Maghrib	5:45	5:55
Esha	7:45	8:15

Source: Islamic Foundation

World community condemns as Pakistan in political limbo

ISLAMABAD, Oct 13: Pakistan was in political limbo today, a day after the army seized power and toppled Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif but failed to name a new administration or announce its post-coup policy, report agencies.

The world community reacted to the coup by suspending aid, threatening diplomatic isolation and urging a speedy return to democratic government.

The army said it was still chalking out its plans after what it called a spontaneous coup on Tuesday as key anti-Sharif politicians pressed for the formation of an interim government to hold new elections.

The country was left without a formal government after the army seized control and dismissed Sharif's 31-month-old cabinet in response to his surprise sacking of army chief General Pervez Musharraf.

Bureaucrats sat in their offices in most government departments in Islamabad but without their political ministers, some of whom were under army detention.

Some ministries including planning and finance were shut today under army orders, government sources said.

So far there has been no

word about the fate of the parliament and four provincial assemblies, or of the pro-Sharif provincial governments.

Musharraf's brief pre-dawn broadcast over state radio and television left the world guessing whether he would hand over to a civilian caretaker government as demanded by opposition parties, encourage Sharif's parliamentary party to elect a new leader, or himself rule until elections were held.

A police statement promised by an army spokesman to answer questions about the future was not released. "There will be no statement today," an army official told Reuters.

Self-exiled former prime minister Benazir Bhutto, now in London, demanded an early return to democracy through an election under an interim government.

Musharraf's likely options are thought to be a limited period of military rule followed by new elections or the installation of a hand-picked government to oversee a return to democracy. Sharif can go to court to challenge his ouster, political observers say.

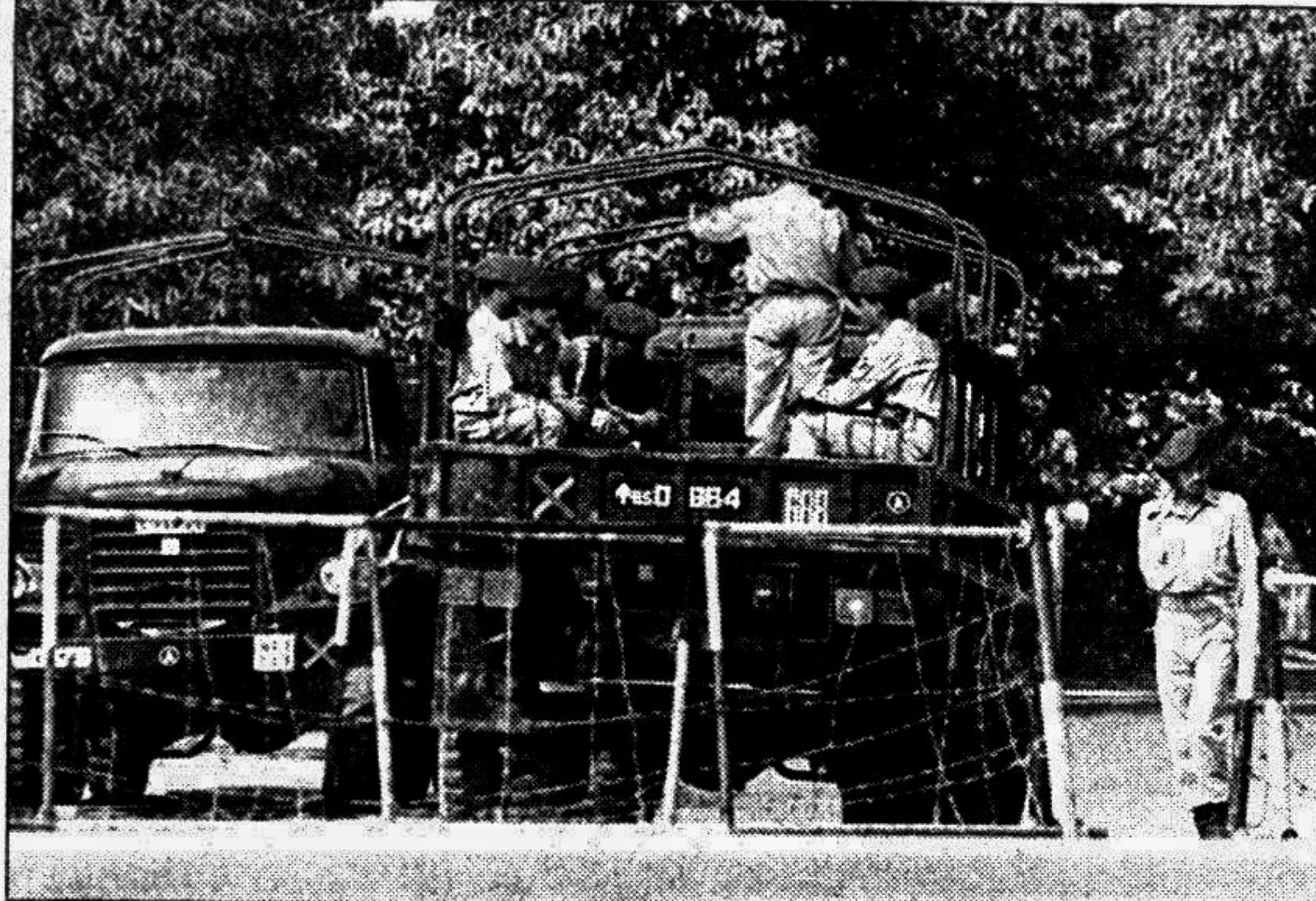
Sharif and his brother Shahbaz, chief minister of Punjab province, were in protective custody, a military spokesman said.

Also in custody was intelligence chief Lieutenant-General Ziauddin, who had been named by Sharif to succeed Musharraf.

"I wish to inform you that the armed forces have moved in as a last resort, to prevent further destabilisation," Musharraf said in a speech over state television.

Musharraf did not provide

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Soldiers guard a road outside Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's residence in Lahore yesterday. Sharif was under house arrest in Islamabad after being ousted in a military coup.

'Shikdar used to bribe a top official of a sensitive dept'

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Oct 12: Ershad Shikdar has said he used to bribe heavily a top official of a very "sensitive department" of the government to roam freely despite being accused in several criminal cases.

But the police commissioner, who for the first time also interrogated Shikdar for over two hours at Sonadanga thana Tuesday night, said the high ranking official does not serve in the police department.

Meanwhile, police today arrested Farid Hossain, an accomplice of Shikdar and one of the accused in the Jubo League leader Khalid murder case, from Shaikhpara thana of Jhenidah district.

He has also been accused in a case for assaulting policemen, said the DC (south) Mazharul Haq. The OC of Khulna thana

said Farid is also involved in the murder of Akimul.

Shikdar, after the Tuesday night's questioning, was quizzed till this evening "due to his physical indisposition", said a source in the Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP). However, he underwent medical check-up again today. The source did not elaborate what the illness is.

Shikdar was taken on a seven-day remand today in connection with Shiraz murder case. The authorities did not let him meet his son and daughter for the second time today, although the fact remains that his first wife Khodeja along with their children has been absconding after the arrest of her husband on August 11.

Meanwhile, Mouze Ali murder case has been revived as

Ershad Shikdar and seven of his accomplices were not named in the charge sheet. They were directly involved in the killing of Mouze Ali, a handling worker of Boyra CSD godown, on October 9, 1994.

A case was filed with Khalishpur thana the following day, accusing 14 persons. The then OC Shawkat Ali, the investigating officer (IO) of the case, later submitted the charge sheet dropping names of Shikdar and his accomplices.

But the then CMM did not take it into cognizance and ordered a re-investigation. Shikdar however had the re-investigation stopped by bribing the police officials concerned, sources said.

In another development, the police commissioner has asked

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Envoys in Bangladesh missions abroad

One third serving on contract, or are political appointees

By M Anwarul Haq

Almost one third of Bangladesh's ambassadors and high commissioners are on contract service or political appointees.

Several of them are retired government officials, in-service military personnel or ruling party men.

Of the 46 envoys now heading Bangladesh missions abroad, 15 are on contract appointment. They include political appointees, military officers or retired diplomats, sources concerned said.

The posts are vacant in two other countries—South Korea and Morocco. None has yet been appointed ambassador to Seoul. A ruling party leader declined to go to Rabat after appointment.

Appointment of so many

mission chiefs on contract basis is causing a negative effect on the morale of career diplomats and is also contrary to norms and conventions in the foreign ministry.

Although it is a practice in many countries to appoint a few ambassadors from outside foreign service cadre, the Bangladesh government does not follow any specific rule and is often "generous" in appointing army personnel and retired diplomats, the sources said.

Earlier, there was a rule not to appoint more than 20 per cent of envoys from outside the foreign service cadre. This rule has been "bended" several times to suit the requirements of different administrations. Now, 33 per cent mission chiefs are on contract or on deputation,

the sources said.

"In fact more contract appointments are being made now than any time in the recent past," one source said.

"This is causing resentment and frustration in foreign service officials who feel that their chances of promotion or appointment as envoys are being unprofessionally obstructed. There are several capable senior diplomats in the queue who did not get the opportunity to be appointed ambassador or high commissioner even after 25 years of service," another source said.

The missions where chiefs are on contract appointment or deputation are: Belgium—Khairul Alam, Bhutan—Saradindu Sekher Chakma.

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Rupganj people attack Rajuk men: 10 hurt

By Staff Correspondent

At least 10 officials and members of the staff of Rajuk were injured when a group of local people attacked them at Kamta area under Rupganj thana under Narayanganj yesterday afternoon.

The incident took place when a group of Rajuk men were engaged in development work of Purbachal Upasahar, a satellite town project on 6,000 acres of land.

Of the injured, nine were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). Rajuk officials and hospital sources said.

Hospital sources identified the injured as Giasuddin

Ahmed, 35, an assistant deputy director, Abdul Latif Helali, 35, and Nazrul Islam, 30, both assistant engineers, Mintu Kumar Das, 32, and supervisors -- Ahsanul Habib, 30, Abdur Rauf, 29, Mizan Mustafa, 25, Sahidul Islam, 24, Nazrul Islam, 27.

A Rajuk official told The Daily Star over telephone last night that a project office of Rajuk was situated at Kamta area in Rupganj.

A team of some 30 Rajuk officials and staffers along with about five police men came under attack by a section of local people when the former went there for development work at

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Election to 10 UNSC seats today

Bangladesh is poised to take its seat in the UN Security Council as the world body elects nonpermanent members of its 15-member vital organ today, reports UNB.

Some 188 member-states of the United Nations are expected to east vote at its Headquarters in New York for nonpermanent members of the high-profile council.

Diplomatic sources say Dhaka's chances of winning one of the ten seats is almost certain as Bangladesh's diplomacy managed to win over full Asian support.

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Arrest of Jubo Dal leader sparks violence at Sutrapur

Angry people clashed with police and set ablaze a police van near Dhupkhola Maidan in the city's Sutrapur area after arrest of a local Jubo Dal leader yesterday evening, reports UNB.

Gunshots and bomb explosions were heard during the clash in which at least 10 people were injured. Police arrested 10 people from the spot, local people said.

The trouble began when police arrested Salauddin Mehdi near the East End Club at about 6 pm.

As the news of arrest of Mehdi spread, his friends and

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Vajpayee sworn in, to head a 70-strong government

From Pallab Bhattacharya

NEW DELHI, Oct 13: Atal Behari Vajpayee was sworn in today as India's Prime Minister for a third term in as many years at the head of a 70-member BJP-led alliance government that presents a combination of experienced administrators and new faces.

Vajpayee, 75, has retained almost the entire existing ministerial council and inducted a number of political heavyweights from BJP's allies, including Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee who has been made a cabinet minister and her party colleague Ajit Kumar Panja who is a minister of state with independent charge.

Mamata Banerjee is the lone woman member in the Vajpayee cabinet.

In all, the ministerial council, sworn in by President K R Narayanan, has 25 cabinet rank ministers, besides Vajpayee, seven ministers of state with independent charge and 37 ministers of state.

The Council of Ministers has 8 number of new faces. There are also two Muslim state ministers — Omar Abdullah and Syed Shah Nawaz Hussain.

Among the prominent figures in the ministerial council are L K Advani, George Fernandes, Murlidhar Manohar Joshi, Jaswant Singh, Yashwant Sinha, Sharad Yadav, Ramvilas Paswan and Uma Bharati.

Two veteran leaders dropped from the new ministry were Sikander Bakht, who was Industry Minister, and Ramkrishna Hegde who had held Commerce portfolio in the previous Vajpayee government.

The portfolios of the new ministers would be announced tomorrow. Vajpayee told reporters after the two-hour swearing in ceremony at the forecourt of Rashtrapati Bhawan here.

West Bengal BJP unit president Tapan Sikdar, who won Dum Dum parliamentary seat for the second time in two years with a huge margin against ruling CPI (M), has been rewarded with minister of state berth, his first stint at the Federal administration.

An astute parliamentarian, a warm leader with rare gift for oratory that can keep people spellbound for hours together, Vajpayee is the mascot for the rainbow coalition he heads.

Vajpayee, who headed the now-defunct Jana Sangh between 1968 and 1973, became the first chief of BJP after Janata Party's split. He was jailed, along with top opposition leaders during emergency imposed by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

AP adds: Vajpayee said today his government is willing to deal with any regime in Pakistan, where the military has staged a coup.

Indian troops were on high alert today along the border between the two nuclear-armed nations.

However, acting Defense Minister George Fernandes said there was no evidence of unusual troop movements on the Pakistani side.

"We are willing to talk to any regime in Pakistan," Vajpayee said in his first comment after his New Democratic Alliance government was sworn in.

"It is for Pakistan to create a climate for resumption of dialogue between the two countries."

Vajpayee taking oath yesterday.

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EC to hold talks on upazila polls Oct 18-19

By Staff Correspondent

The Election Commission yesterday sent letters to political parties inviting them for discussions on various issues related to city corporation and Upazila elections.

The Commission will hold dialogue with the political parties on October 18 and 19. We sent letters to the parties today," Additional Secretary of EC Secretariat Aziz Ahmed Chowdhury said yesterday.

"Letters have been sent to all the parties having representation in the Jatiya Sangsad elected in 1991 and/or 1996."

Other sources in the EC Secretariat said the Commission is planning to hold the elections between mid-November and mid-December.

In response to an EC request, the education ministry has sent a circular to all educational institutions to complete annual examinations by November 18.

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10 injured in clashes Attempt to hold exam at DU fails

By DU Correspondent

The Dhaka University authorities' attempt to hold examinations despite a student strike apparently failed due to chaos, violent protests and police action on agitating students on the campus yesterday.

At least 10 students including a DU correspondent of a Bangla daily were injured in the police action on the activists of Ganatantrik Chhatra Oikya.

GCO had earlier called the strike at all the universities in the country, demanding reopening of Jahangirnagar University and withdrawal of enhanced admission fees there.

A small number of examinees turned up at examination halls at Arts Faculty building as GCO activists obstructed them from entering the campus. A good number of GCO activists from JU were seen on the DU

campus. Those who could make their way into the examination halls also could not perform properly, some examinees and other sources said. Most of the examinees just recorded their attendance, they claimed.

But the DU authorities claimed that most of the examinations scheduled for the day were held and majority of the examinees appeared.

No examination started as per schedule -- 9 am. The authorities allowed the examinees to sit for examinations "when ever they could reach the centres".

Later, an emergency meeting of the DU Syndicate expressed sympathy for the examinees affected by yesterday's untoward incidents and promised

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Khaleda, top BNP leaders talk opposition's electoral alliance

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and top party leaders last night reviewed the political situation and discussed the strategy to further intensify the 'ouster-government' movement.

Sources concerned said they stressed the need for building a broad-based opposition unity, initiating talks with all opposition parties, professional groups, business community and others to mobilise support for the ouster-government movement, formulating an 'outline' for movement and future polls and party activities.

Held at the official residence of Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, Khaleda Zia, the meeting was attended by BNP policy-makers Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Khondaker Delwar Hossain and Dr

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Hartal observed Police, BNP clash at Dewanganj: 50 injured

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, Oct 13: At least 50 people, including two magistrates and 13 policemen were injured in a clash between BNP activists and police during the hartal at Dewanganj thana headquarters today.

The day-long hartal was enforced in the district by BNP protesting killing of party's Dewanganj thana unit president Advocate Abdur Razzak on Monday.

Today's clash erupted when a procession carrying the body of Razzak turned violent at Dewanganj Bazar at around 10 am.

The processionists ransacked local Awami League office, some shops and a godown. When a contingent of police led by two magistrates came to the spot, the processionists started pelting stones at them, injuring the magistrates and 13 policemen.

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A pro-strike activist is being dragged to a police vehicle on Dhaka University campus yesterday.

957 pushed in by BSF in last 20 months

Star Report

In what officials termed a 'second wave', a total of 957 people have been pushed into Bangladesh by Indian BSF through different border areas over the last 20 months.

These people were pushed into the country in 130 attempts during the period starting from March 11 last year, home ministry officials said.

The statistics provided by the ministry also include Sunday's push-in of seven persons through the border areas of Malekanda and Barshashi in Nilphamari district, they said.

The push-in efforts resisted

by Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) as well as people of border areas. During 1992-1995, a total of 14,505 people were pushed in in 381 batches.

The BDR resisted all these efforts and subsequently pushed them back, they said.

These push-in incidents occurred in the border areas of Neel Dumur, Sankhira, Jessore, Chuadanga, Meerpur of Kushia, Chapainawabganj, Rajshahi, Naogaon, Dinajpur, Thakurgaon, Phulbari, Rangpur, Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Srirampal and Khagrachhari, the officials said.

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Sirajganj

Jubo League leader held: Hartal today

From Our Correspondent SIRAJGANJ, Oct 13: A faction of Jubo League called a dawn-to-dusk hartal tomorrow demanding immediate release of district unit general secretary Kamal Hossain Moju.

Moju was arrested earlier today from Kaziapur area. He was sent to Sirajganj jail movements before an agitated procession headed towards the District Collectorate Building premises at about 10:30 am.

Moju told the reporters that he was arrested for protesting the crimes committed by the local Awami League secretary and the brother of Home Minister.

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