

What's on today . . .

Nat'l Craft Show '99: The inaugural ceremony of the National Craft Show '99 will be held. Organisers: Export Promotion Bureau and Banglacrast. Chief guest: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 11 am.

Training course: The inaugural ceremony of the Regional Training course on Food and Nutrition Programme Planning and Management will be held. Organisers: BIRTA, MOA & RTP-FNP, UPLB. Chief guest: Begum Matia Chowdhury, Minister for Agriculture and Food. Venue: BARC auditorium, Farmgate. Time: 9:30 am.

Discussion meeting: Hamdard Foundation Bangladesh will hold a discussion meeting in memory of Hakim Mohammad Sayeed, founder of the modern Hamdard Laboratories. Venue: Hamdard Bhaban, 291/1 Sonargaon Rd. Time: 4:00 pm.

..... and tomorrow

Film show: Liberation War Museum will hold the screening of "Seen, Heard and Respected: The Street Children of CSKS", the 1999 Worldfest-Houston International Film and Video Festival Silver Award winner. Venue: Museum premises. Time: 7:00 pm.

Weather

Heavy falls likely

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers with temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and at a few places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions with moderately heavy falls along coastal belt in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Day temperature may fall by 1 to 3 degree Celsius over the country during the period, according to Met office.

The country's highest temperature yesterday 34.2 degree Celsius was recorded at Cox's Bazar and Srimongal and the lowest 23.2 degree Celsius at Satkhira.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5.31 pm and rises tomorrow at 5.57 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
Dhaka	34.0	73
Chittagong	33.5	78
Rajshahi	30.0	86
Khulna	33.5	81
Barisal	32.8	82
Sylhet	32.5	71
Cox's Bazar	34.2	77

Tofail to opposition: Take part in Upazila polls

CHAR FASSON, Bhola, Oct 16: Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed yesterday called upon the opposition political parties to take part in the upazila elections saying there is no scope for capturing power through undemocratic ways, reports BSS.

Addressing a big public meeting here yesterday, the minister said the opposition was indulging in negative politics which would not bring about welfare of the people. "You may come to power through people's mandate and election is the only way to capture state power," he said amid thunderous applause at the meeting, presided over by Abdul Mannan Hawlader, Chairman of Char Fasson Pourasabha.

The minister also addressed a number of wayside meetings

on way to Char Fasson.

Tofail said, "We shall stay in power until July 14, 2001. Insha Allah, because people voted us to power. He told the opposition political parties that the days of capturing power through undemocratic ways have gone. He hoped that the opposition would take part in the forthcoming upazila elections, adding the upazila elections would be held on schedule.

The minister warned the leaders and workers of Awami League against what he said, the destructive and subversive activities of the opposition.

He said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has identified the village as the focal point of all development. The government has given top priority to set up village based industries. Tofail said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina begins her work in the morning after offering prayer and reading the Holy Quran regularly. She got the UNESCO Peace Prize for signing the CHT peace accord. She was also acclaimed for signing the Ganges Water agreement with India, he said.

The meeting was addressed, among others, by Mofazzal Hossain Shaheen and Fazlul Kader Moinu, president and general secretary of Bhola district Awami League, central leader Abdul Momin Tulu, Abdullah Al Islam Jakob and Shafiqur Rahman Kiron, Chairman of Bhola Pourasabha.

12 Tigers killed, 9 bunkers destroyed in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO, Oct 16: Sri Lankan troops destroyed nine Tamil Tiger rebel bunkers and killed 12 guerrillas in an attack in northern Kilinochchi district, military officials said today, reports Reuters.

They said the troops on offensive patrol detected the rebel bunker line and attacked it at Vannivilankulam village on Friday.

"Ground troops confirmed 12 Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) terrorists were killed and two automatic weapons and a rocket recovered," one official said.

Two soldiers sustained minor wounds during the confrontation.

The clash came a day after fierce fighting in the north and east of the country left at least 150 combatants dead, according to the defence ministry.

The ministry said in a statement 100 rebels and 19 soldiers were killed when the guerrillas launched an abortive attack on the military's defence lines near Ampakam village in northern Kilinochchi district late on Thursday.

Troops had recovered 55 rebel bodies and were making arrangements with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to hand over 35, officials said.

In a separate clash, Sri Lankan naval gunboats attacked a flotilla of Tamil Tiger boats off the northeastern coast, killing some 25 guerrillas, navy officials said.

Bagerhat JCD convenor held

BAGERHAT, Oct 16: District convenor of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) was arrested from Muniganj area here today, reports UNB.

The arrested JCD leader, Khadem Neyamul Nasir Alap, was wanted in a number of cases, police said.

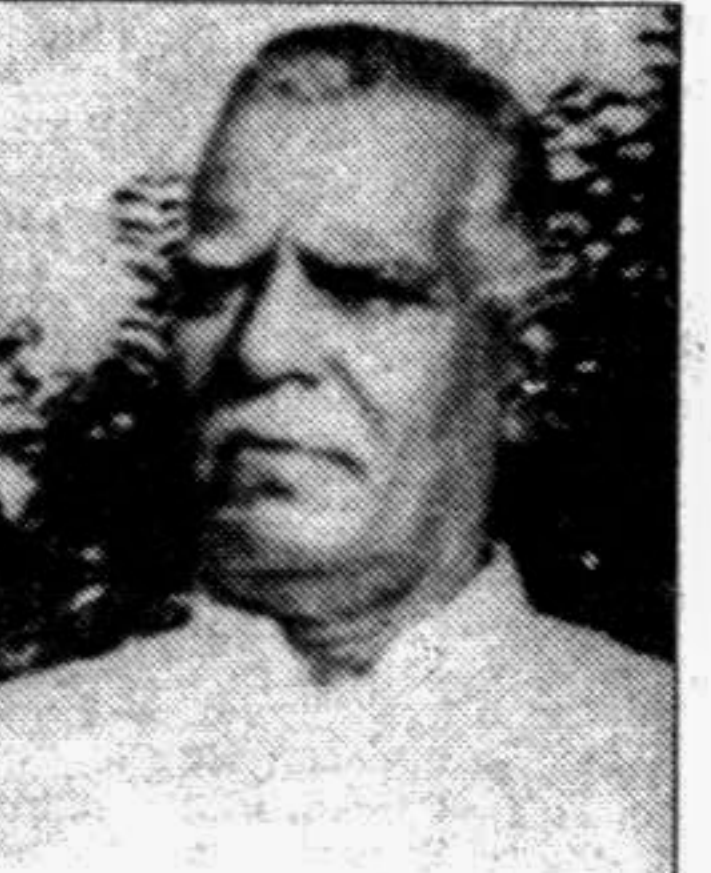
2 killed in Jhenidah

JHENIDAH, Oct 16: A young man and a minor girl were killed by unidentified assailants in Shaillakupa Friday night, reports UNB.

Police said Badsha Mia, 32, who was last seen in Raira bazar at about 10 pm Friday did not return home in the night. His body was found hanging in a tree adjacent to the bazar this morning.

In another incident Rikta, 8, daughter of Ziarat Mondal, who used to work in a rice mill at Kabirpur went missing Friday night. Police recovered her body from a vegetable field adjacent to the rice mill this morning.

The bodies were taken to hospital morgue for autopsy. Separate cases were filed in these connection.



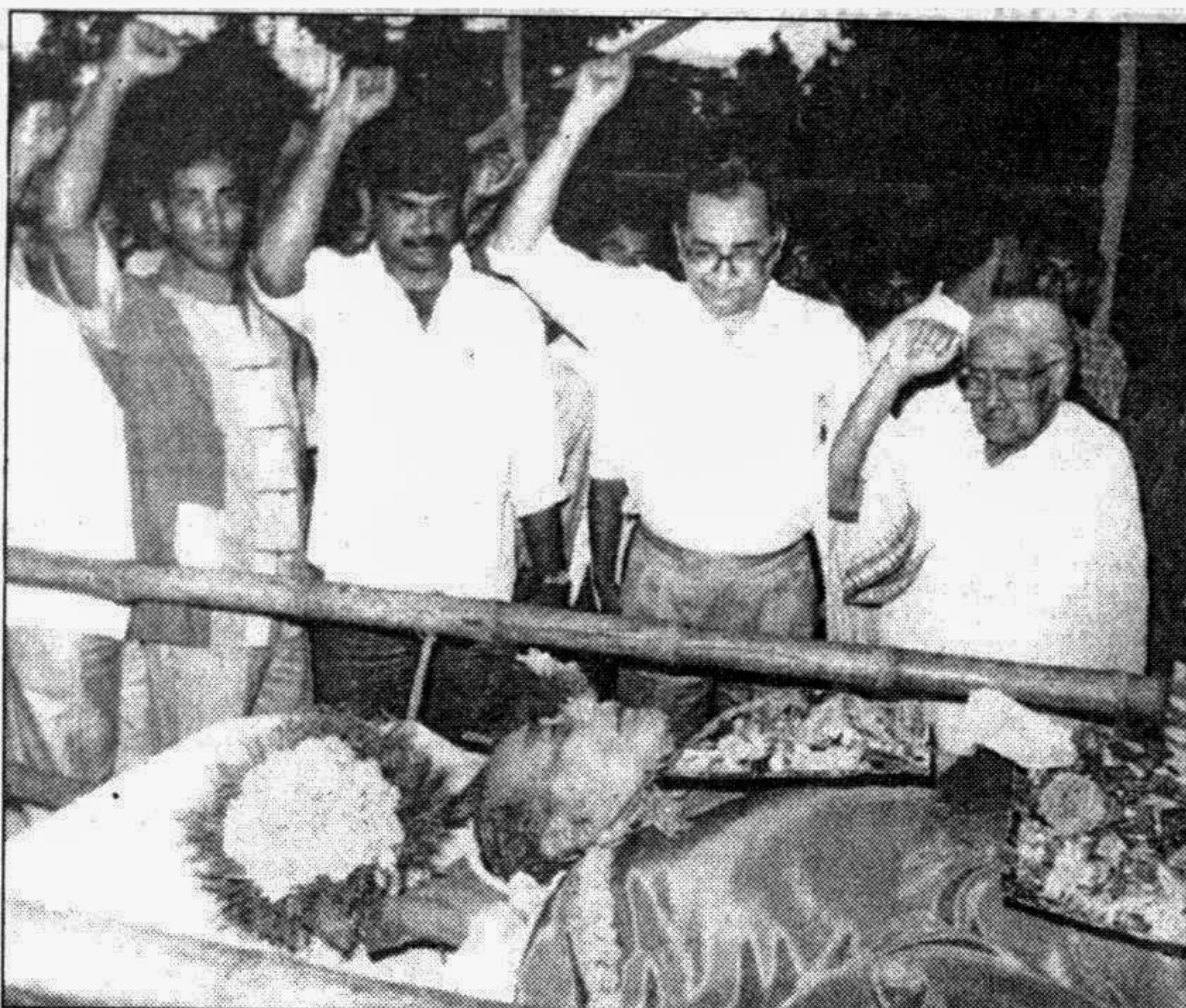
Death anniversary of Rahatullah Sarkar today

The 17th death anniversary of Rahatullah Sarkar, former member of the undivided Bengal Legislative Council and the then East Pakistan Provincial Assembly will be observed today, says a press release.

Qurankhuani, milad mahfil and feeding of the destitute have been arranged at Parbatipur residence of late Rahatullah on the occasion.

A milad mahfil will also be held at the residence of late Rahatullah's son, MA Jalil, Member of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) at 7/1, Naoratan Colony Circuit House Road after Magreb prayers today.

A close associate of Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Huq and Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy, late Rahatullah Sarkar was a prominent leader of the Juktfront and was involved in the anti-British freedom movement and he later took part in the Bangladesh Liberation War.



Leaders of different political parties placed wreaths on the coffin of Ajoy Bhattacharya, a communist leader, at the Teacher Students Centre (TSC) island of the Dhaka University yesterday. — Star photo

Lalon Mela opens at Kushtia

KUSHTIA, Oct 16: Lalon died 108 years ago but his philosophy is still kept alive among thousands of his disciples. This was manifested by the two-day Baul mela at Chheruria organised on the 109th death anniversary of Lalon Shah opened here today, reports BSS.

Hundreds of spiritual followers of Lalon Shah gathered at Chheruria today, the mazar of the poet and the place of his activities, to pay homage to him. Lalon's life and 'Shad-honas' were centered round the principle of universal brotherhood and religious integration.

It's a grand occasion for the members of the Lalon Tarika, a school of thinking of folk music, to meet in Lalon Mela (Lalon Fair) in observance of his death anniversary on Pahela Kartik of Bengali calendar every year.

Lalon Fakir, a protagonist of the Baul cult born in the seventies of the eighteenth century, died in October 1890.

Although he had no academic background, the philosophy reflected in his songs suggested his profound depth of philosophical thought.

The newly developed ground for the proposed 'Lalon Complex' and the 'Mazar Site' of Lalon Shah took a different look today as folk and Baul singers camped either in group or individually singing songs of Lalon Shah to observe the death anniversary.

The local authorities has imposed a ban on smoking ganja inside the mazar complex, which is usually called by the Baul singers as 'Shiddhi'. But most of the admirers and visitors of the fair welcomed the decision as a positive one.

Speaker attends plenary session of IPU in Berlin

Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury has said that culture of civic and human rights constitute the hallmark of modern and progressive society and this can be nurtured only in democracy with strong institutions, reports BSS.

The speaker said this while taking part in the general debate on political, economic and social institutions in the world at the plenary session of Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) at Berlin on Friday, according to a message received in the city yesterday.

He said a new challenge to the world in the new millennium would be to strengthen the democratic institutions and added that the IPU would have to play a vital role in accomplishing this objective.

Chowdhury called upon the IPU particularly the committee on human rights of parliamentarians to uphold the dignity of the lawmakers because it is involved with the very essence of democratic values. He said people's representatives represent the will of the people and as such, they deserve the kind of respect and rights which are due for the people at large.

The speaker, in this context, referred to the holding of the Asian parliamentary conference in Dhaka last month and said it was a step forward in the right direction in developing unity and cohesion of the parliamentarians. He said the founding of the association of Asian parliamentarians for peace at the conference will help further the interest of the parliamentarians in Asia in particular and the world in general.

EU calls for cross-border legal system

TAMPERE, Finland, Oct 16: EU leaders today called for a vast and unprecedented cross-border legal system putting teeth in the hunt for organised criminals and their money, dealing fairly and coherently with migrants, and assuring business and ordinary citizens that court judgements in one EU country would be respected in all others, reports AFP.

The heads of state and government, in a draft paper to be approved at the conclusion of a two-day extraordinary summit here, called for "creation of an area of freedom, security and justice in the European Union."

To beef up the fight against organised crime, it said, the EU leaders agreed to set up a pan-European prosecuting unit called Eurojust, composed of national prosecutors, magistrates, and police specialists detached from member states.

"It should be rooted out wherever it occurs. The European Council is determined to ensure that concrete steps are taken to trace, freeze, seize and confiscate the proceeds of crime."

The draft document also called for "common policies on asylum and immigration" while "fighting illegal immigration and related international crime."

It stressed the need for "absolute respect of the right to seek asylum."

But the document suggested going still further, setting up partnerships with countries of origin to deal with the root causes that drive people from their homes in border-hopping odysseys in search of greener pastures and more humane treatment.

Tributes paid to Ajoy Bhattacharya

The body of Ajoy Bhattacharya, the veteran communist leader who died on Wednesday at the age of 85, was kept at TSC island yesterday for others to pay respect to him, reports UNB.

Septuagenarian Renuka Bhattacharya, wife of the leader, stood in solemn silence after laying wreath on the body of her husband.

Earlier, the committee for funeral of Comrade Ajoy Bhattacharya brought his body from BIRDEM mortuary where it was kept after he died of brain hemorrhage on Wednesday afternoon.

The body of elderly communist leader of the country was to be taken to his hometown Sylhet late last night. The body will be taken to his village home in Lauta, Baniabazar.

Leaders of Left Democratic Front, Jatiya Ganotantrik Front, Ganotantrik Biplobi Jote, CPM, Workers Party, Gano Forum, Samyabadi, Dal, Sramik Krishak Samajbadi, Dal, Trade Union Sangha, Ganotantrik Mohila Samity, Dhruvotara Sangkritik Sangsad, Hotel Sramik Union, Jatiya Chhatra Dal, Krishak Sangram Samity, Shaheed Biplobi O Deshpremik Smriti Sangsad and residents of Lauta came to TSC island to pay respect to the departed leader.

General secretary of underground Bangladesh Biplobi Communist Party (M-L) Arif Hossain in a statement urged the party men to transform the grief into strength and follow the way of Comrade Bhattacharya.

Ajoy Bhattacharya was imprisoned several times for 20 years during the British and Pakistan regimes. He last went underground in 1967 and never surfaced until his death.

Born on January 10, 1914, Bhattacharya was involved in Marxist movement since 1935 and came to limelight leading the historic Nankar revolt.

He sided with Maoist line after the Communist Party got split in 1967 and was a politburo member of underground Bangladesh Biplobi Communist Party (M-L).

Leaders and activists of left leaning political parties, writers and cultural personalities thronged the TSC island in the afternoon to pay respect to Bhattacharya, who was also author of a number of books.

BNP rally in city today

BNP will hold a rally at Paltan Maidan at 3:30 pm today (Sunday) to protest 'government's conspiracy' to involve BNP vice-president Tariqul Islam in a case of bomb explosion at Uddich function at Jessore, said a party press release, reports UNB.

Ershad Shikdar

One of them, Karam Sarder, was tried in absentia.

In another development, the IO of Akimul Murder case was changed today. But the reason could not be known from any source in the KMP.

The OC of Khulna thana is yet to endorse the new IO.

It was learnt from a reliable source that Shikdar had agreed to make judicial confession about the murder of Akimul.

Akimul was murdered reportedly for having an affair with Shikdar's first wife Khodja. She has been absconding since the Akimul murder case was filed, police said.

Meanwhile, the interrogation team is reviewing the information it got by interrogating Shikdar, Liaquat Lashkar and Noor-e-Alam.

Facts that transpired from interrogation are being checked and re-checked before taking a final decision to frame charges, said the DC (South).

Police said that Liaquat Lashkar was just fishing in the troubled water by keeping him far from being involved in the murders.

At Friday midnight, Shikdar repeatedly appealed to the investigators not to demolish his house 'Swarnakamol'. "I will honestly confess my complicity to murders on condition that you will not demolish my house rendering Khodja and my children homeless," Shikdar was quoted as saying.

He sought a meeting with his wife and mother-in-law (Khodja's mother) only for few minutes. But the police commissioner turned down his request, sources said.

IFIC

And there are more questions. Does IFIC really need to build its own building?

"In the falling real estate rents, what could be the logical investment preference? And does IFIC really need that much of land for its head office?" asked the bank official.

In the shrewdly articulated board memo, the management has mentioned that out of 40 banks including NCBs, denationalised banks, private banks and foreign banks, eleven have their own premises. However, the sources point out, only three of these 11 banks are in the private sector.

To make its case stronger for having the head office outside Motijheel area, it said potential sites could be in Kawnar Bazar (topping the list), Mohakhali, Gulshan, Banani, Rajarbagh and Kakrali.

IFIC certainly does not need 2.5 bighas of land for its head office. So, it proposes to resell part of it to finance the cost of construction.

The idea has drawn criticism from the bank officials who argue that "it is not the function of a bank to get involved in real estate business".

Pakistan: US hints

From page 1
spokesman Joe Lockhart said. The Pakistani general planned to speak to the people today.

But the coup leader cancelled a much awaited televised address today, delaying the promised announcement of an interim administration that Pakistanis hoped would impose order to their chaotic politics, according to AP.

A spokesman for Gen Pervez Musharraf said the general was still drafting the speech today, four days after he deposed Sharif and named himself chief executive.

The spokesman did not say when the address would be rescheduled.

The 15-nation European Union, meanwhile, drafted a resolution halting aid to Pakistan unless it produces a plan for the restoration of democratic rule by Nov 15.

A draft prepared at the EU summit meeting in Finland said the organisation "will suspend all development assistance except support for the poor" unless the military regime in Pakistan establishes a 'clear timetable' within a month for the restoration of democratic government.

At military headquarters in Rawalpindi, Musharraf met the Japanese ambassador today, the latest in a series of contacts with diplomats in hope of establishing some tolerance for his military regime.

AFP adds: Pakistan's new military rulers are wasting no time in preparing a sweeping anti-corruption drive, aimed at underscoring the moral legitimacy of their recent coup, officials sources said in Islamabad today.

On Friday, the central State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) froze both foreign and local currency accounts of all big-name politicians and began consultations with revenue officials and federal investigators to draw up a target list of prominent loan and tax defaulters.

"The SBP will now start issuing lists of defaulters and the amounts against each of them will be recovered from their accounts, auctioning the properties of these politicians who have looted the national wealth," said a senior civil servant.

Such a campaign would receive strong public support, but the new regime knows that it must move fast to keep the initial goodwill that followed the ouster of a deeply unpopular government.

The continued public support will rest largely on the military's ability to bring the corrupt officials to book, and to instigate measures to revive a national economy that is on the brink of bankruptcy.

Another report says, some non-career diplomats are being recalled in light of the recent military takeover.

foreign office spokesman said today, denied press reports of the recall of all non-career diplomats appointed by the government of ousted prime minister Nawaz Sharif.

He did not say how many envoys would have to return. The spokesman said the rest of the non-career diplomats would complete their tenures.

US team due Oct 29

From page 1
argued that it would not agree to a 20 per cent carried interest partnership option for GTCL. It however, said that GTCL was welcome to be a partner in the pipeline scheme through equity sharing.

Petrobangla has rejected a proposal of Unocal that British Law would be applicable to all legal interpretations and disputes over the WRIP components. Petrobangla said only Bangladesh law would be applicable to the project.

Focusing on 'failure' of the project due to 'force majeure', Unocal proposed that Bangladesh should not hold Unocal responsible for the failure if that occurred due to 'untoward foreign political reasons'. Petrobangla also rejected this proposal.

Petrobangla had earlier sought two legal advisers to make its own legal analysis of the WRIP. But the energy ministry rejected the idea.

An Unocal official, asked about the WRIP negotiation outcomes, said that it would be unfair to make any comment now

DESA's priority

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DESA also covers Narayan-ganj, Narsingdi, Manikganj and Gazipur districts.

The Dhaka Electric Supply Company (DESCO) claims that Mirpur area has a shortage of 6 mw and the Rural Electrification Board (REB) 20 mw yesterday. Besides covering rural areas, REB also supplies power to some urban areas and district towns. REB's daily requirement is around 75 mw.

The control room at the Power Development Board was reluctant to provide information on power shortage in the country. One official claimed last night that the total load shedding in the country was only 136 mw yesterday. He claimed that the power supply situation was relatively better yesterday.

According to him, PDB's plants generated 2350 mw of power yesterday against the requirement of more than 2500 mw.

PM: Australia

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strengthen our investment linkages. Of course, our two countries also shared a love of cricket."

Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam visited Bangladesh in January 1975 at the invitation of President Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. It is virtually a long-due return visit by Prime Minister Hasina.

Hasina will address a meeting of Bangladesh Trade and Investment Forum in Canberra, where leading Australian investors and businessmen would be present.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) on the utilisation of Australian aid in Bangladesh would be signed during the Prime Minister's tour. Australian annual aid programme in Bangladesh is around 36.4 million Australian dollar.

Australian businessmen are interested in making investment in sectors like processed foods, dairy, oilseed, services to gas sector and telecommunications.

Principal exports from Australia include milk and cream, fresh vegetables, oilseeds and cotton, and imports from Bangladesh include jute, fertilisers and woven fabrics.

Apart from economic field, Australia is interested in providing scholarship for the development of cricket in Bangladesh. The Australian government may moot a specific proposal in this area.

The Australian National University will confer an honorary doctorate on the Bangladesh leader when he visits the university to deliver a lecture there.

The Prime Minister is expected to return home on October 23.

since an adviser has been appointed in this regard. "For the sake of neutrality of the Adviser, I think all parties should now stop giving their opinions publicly regarding WRIP."

Unocal submitted the WRIP proposals in mid-97 when the government gave the company an exclusive opportunity to develop Shahbazpur gasfield earlier discovered by BAPEX. Initially, other oil companies criticised the government for not giving them any chance to compete.

Later, to give the project a transparent look, the government decided to float a tender seeking matching proposals from other companies. However, as the WRIP components turned out to be more and more complicated, the US government extended its support for appointment of a consultant to scrutinise WRIP first.

Sources concerned said that Unocal was mainly interested in the pipeline scheme that would connect the national gas grid with the gas-starved western region of the country. The pipeline would also allow gas to be transmitted up to Dighalaj in Kushtia -- some 70 km from the Indian gas pipeline system.

10 killed in clash in Indonesian Ambon city

JAKARTA, Oct 16: A policeman and at least two, and up to nine, civilians were killed in renewed sectarian clashes in Ambon, the capital of the troubled eastern Indonesian province of Maluku, police and a report said today, reports AFP.

Maluku military spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Iwa Budiman said one policeman and two civilians were killed in Friday's clash between Christians and Muslims in the Suli and Trial areas, 20 kilometres (12.5 miles) east of the city.

Sergeant Ferry Somael "died from a bullet wound in the head" and based on information received here, two residents were also killed in the skirmish, Budiman told AFP by phone.

Dighanala

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According sources, the clash broke out when a tribal woman picked up a quarrel with an army man Kaiser, a Baburchara Bazar, some 50 km from here.

The woman alleged that Kaiser was forcing her to follow him to a place and raised an alarm. At this, tribal people at the Bazar attacked him and beat him severely.

On hearing this, troops stationed nearby rushed to the spot. But they were also attacked by the tribals.

Local Bangalees then came forward and a clash broke out, lasting about two hours.

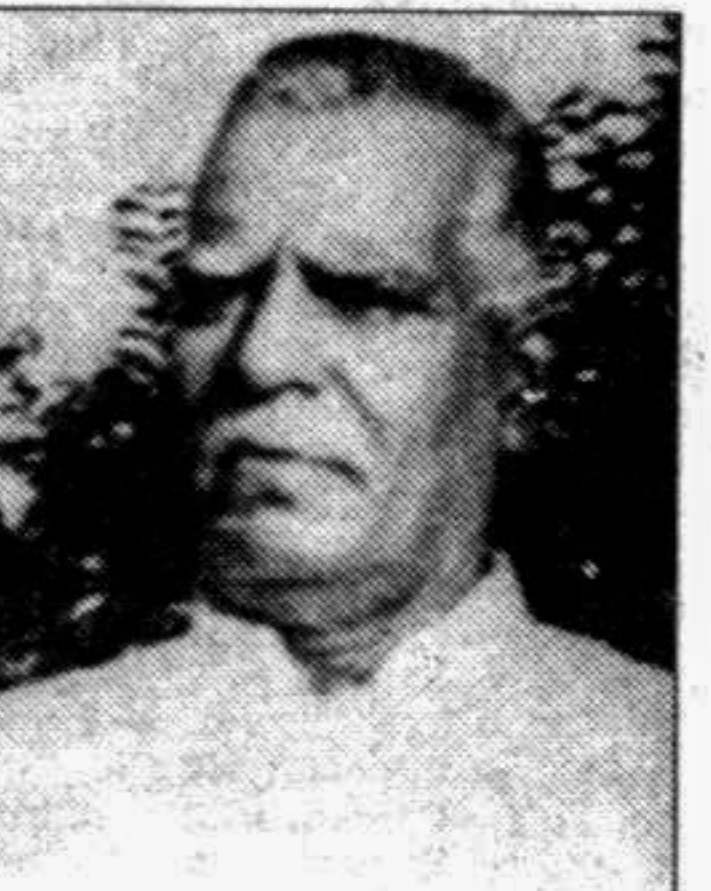
Police later brought the situation under control, the sources said.

A helicopter took two injured army personnel, Kaiser and Jahir, to a hospital in Chittagong. About 45 other injured were rushed to Khagrachhari district hospital. Eight of them were later shifted to Chittagong medical College Hospital.

Additional police force has been sent to the area from the district headquarters. The Deputy Commissioner was not available for comments.

Buriganga

From page 1
About creating parks and open spaces along both banks of the river, 77 per cent supported the idea while 23 per cent thought that it was not 'feasible' because it would require large-scale eviction of residents.



Proshika President Dr Kazi Faruq Ahmed and Senior Vice President Mahbul Karim (2nd and 3rd from left side) flanked by other NGO officials addressing a press conference on 'vetch', a toxic grain imported from Australia, in the city yesterday. — Star photo

JP working body meet Oct 19

By Staff Correspondent

The first meeting of the newly elected working committee of Jatiya Party will be held at 3 pm on October 19 at Sobhanbagh Community Centre in the city.

Party chairman HM Ershad would preside over the meeting, says a press release.

Jamaat calls for ousting govt

Jamaat-e-Islami Amir Gislam Azam yesterday called upon all irrespective of party affiliations to oust the government through an allout mass movement to save the country's independence and sovereignty, reports UNB.

Addressing a rally at Syedpur airport, he said man could not have peace without the establishment of rule of Allah. Peace cannot be established in the country if Islamic ideal is not followed at every tier of society, the Jamaat Amir said.

He accused the ruling party of hatching a conspiracy against Islamic ideals. He urged upon all to force the government to resign through a relentless mass movement.

Iraq rejects UN discussion