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 66 days to the  
3rd Millennium

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**Blocks 15&16**  
 Ministry okays transfer of operatorship

**Star Report**  
 The energy ministry finally cleared late last week the operatorship transfer of British oil company Cairn to oil giant Shell for blocks 15 and 16. sources said.

From now on, Shell officially takes responsibilities of these two blocks that include the off-shore Sangu field.

The two oil companies struck a deal earlier this year under which Shell took over the Cairn's Bangladeshi concerns from July last.

Despite a number of objections from the law ministry and Petrobangla regarding the operatorship transfer — an issue that is not addressed by the Production Sharing Contract (PSC) between Cairn and Bangladesh government — Petrobangla okayed the matter in late June.

However, the energy min-  
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**BNP road march towards Sylhet postponed**

The BNP has postponed its two-day road march towards Sylhet scheduled for October 31-November 1, reports UNB.

No reason was attributed to the postponement, but a party press release yesterday said a fresh date for the march to Sylhet would be announced later.

BNP will now go for road march to Comilla on November 1.

The Dhaka-Comilla-Brahmanbaria road march on November 1 will halt at Daudkandi, Chandina, Devi- dwar high school ground, Companiganj, Mirpur, Saydabad, MM Khan college ground and hold rallies at these places.

BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia who will lead the road march will address the rallies.

**Proposal to replace arbitration act, amend SEC order approved**

**By Staff Correspondent**  
 The cabinet yesterday approved a proposal of the Law Ministry for scrapping a couple of decades-old laws on arbitration of financial disputes and enacting a fresh legislation to replace them.

According to the cabinet decision, the Law Ministry would take necessary steps to get the Arbitration (Protocol and Convention) Act, 1937, and The Arbitration Act, 1940, repealed by parliament.

The cabinet has already ap- proved a draft bill — The Arbitration Bill, 1999 — to replace the old ones. The bill is likely to

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BB warns 5 banks against illegal money transfers thru 'hundi' India targets \$50b software exports by 2008

DSE, CSE price quotation  
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**Prospectus**

Today's issue of The Daily Star contains a four-page prospectus on Legacy Footwear Limited

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**Prayer Timings**

**October 26**

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:40	5:20
Zohr	12:45	1:30
Asr	4:00	4:15
Maghrib	5:32	5:37
Esha	7:15	7:45

Source: Islamic Foundation

# The Daily Star

 Today's issue  
 20 pages

**TOSHIBA**  
**FRIDGE**  
 With Compressor MADE IN JAPAN  
 -TOSHIBA FRIDGE guarantees best Performance  
**RANGS GROUP**

## Election of 3 city corpsns in first week of Dec

By Nurul Kabir

Election of three city corporations out of the four will be held in the first week of December while schedule for the polls will be announced this week.

The three are Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi city corporations.

The decisions were taken at a meeting of the Election Commission with its chief Mohammad Abu Hena in the chair yesterday, said EC official.

"The Commission has not yet fixed the date, but it may be December 3 or 4. In any case, elections will be held before December 7."

The election schedule will be announced before the end of this week. "May be it would be announced in a couple of days after the parliamentary by-election in Faridpur-4 constituency," the official said. The by-election is scheduled for November 27.

Earlier, the EC had invited the main political parties for exchange of views on various issues relating to election of the

certain wards of Dhaka City Corporation," the secretary said. "That is why we are going to hold election of three city corporations."

Leaders of the ruling Awami League, its partners in the government Jatiya Party led by Anwar Hossain Monju and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal of A S M Rob, and the Left Democratic Front responded positively to the EC invitation.

The AL delegation suggested that election of the city corporations should be held before the Ramadhan which begins in the second week of December, and the Upazila polls after the Ramadhan.

JSD and JP told the EC to hold both the Upazila and the city corporation polls before the Ramadhan.

The main opposition parties including BNP rejected the EC invitation. They have decided

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## Power failure takes toll on mills, factories

By Staff Correspondent

Mills and factories are the worst sufferers of frequent power failure which has pushed many manufacturing units towards "sickness" and even closure, industry operators said.

The Dhaka and its adjacent areas have been suffering a shortage of 100-200 megawatts every day for the last few weeks, according to DESA sources.

"Power goes off 10 times a day on an average," said Insan Ali, head electrician of General Engineering and Foundry Limited in the BSCIC industrial estate at Tongi. He said that the power supply situation had worsened recently and disruptions often continued for several hours.

"Power supply was disrupted as many as 17 times in the industrial estates on a day last week," he said. "Failure to ensure normal power supply is

causing serious disruptions in production, wastage of raw materials, loss of work hours and damage to the machines," said Anwar Hossain, owner of Selim Rabbar and Plastic Industries.

He said: "We urged the government many times to ensure uninterrupted power supply at least to the BSCIC industrial estates. But no body paid any heed to our plea."

"If the situation does not improve, many factories would be forced to stop production," he said. Only the larger industries are surviving because they have been able to set up their own power generation system. "Others are on the verge of collapse," he said.

"Earlier, our factory could produce as many as 100 tube wells every a day but now we cannot make even 50," Insan Ali informed The Daily Star.

Frequent power failure has caused a loss of around Tk 25 lakh to an engineering factory in Shyampur, Postagola in a year. "The factory is now closed and the owner is thinking to sell it off," said Abdul Hamid Bhuiya, manager of the factory, United Traders.

"It became almost impossible to continue production because we never knew when power would go off. Sudden disruptions caused loss of huge raw materials," he added.

"The factory deals with iron and steel materials which cannot be processed at a required temperature without continuous power supply. If power is off for more than one hour after crushing iron sheets, they become cold and nothing can be produced from the raw materials," Ahmed explained.

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### Decision to allow TU activities

## Investors at DEPZ demand 'legal protection, safety'

By Rafiq Hasan

Foreign and local investors at the Dhaka Export Processing Zone (DEPZ) have demanded "legal protection and safety" of their investments if trade union is allowed there, according to sources.

They made the demand yesterday while exchanging views with Executive Chairman of Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (BEPAZ) M A B Siddique Talukder and US ambassador in Bangladesh John C Holzman on introduction of trade union in EPZ areas. General Manager of DEPZ Nafisuddin Ahmed was also present.

The meeting took place at the DEPZ auditorium at Savar

when the US ambassador made an unscheduled visit there in the morning. A large number of investors were present at the meeting, source said.

A number of investors hinted that if trade union in its present form is allowed in their factories, they will be forced to withdraw their investments from Bangladesh.

One of the main reasons for which we set up industries in the EPZ was that it was free from all kinds of labour movement. We were never told that restriction on trade union would be withdrawn gradually," an investor told the meeting.

"If conducive environment

does not exist, many foreign investors will re-think about their investment. If trade union is allowed, there should be separate rules and regulations for protection of foreign investment," he added.

The US ambassador told the investors that Bangladesh government signed an agreement with the American Federation of Labour Institutes in 1992 that restriction on trade union in EPZs would be withdrawn by 2000.

Holzman said US labour organisations are creating pressure on him to ask Bangladesh government to implement the

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### Accord to be signed Oct 28

## Dhaka's call to implement '74 border treaty

Bangladesh and India would sign a joint declaration specifying steps to be implemented by both the countries for ensuring smooth border management to curb all illegal cross-border activities, reports UNB.

Official sources said the accord would be concluded on October 28 capping talks at a four-day Director General-level border-coordination conference between Bangladesh Rifles and the Border Security Forces of India.

An 11-member Indian delegation led by BSF Director General EN Ram Mohan is attending the border talks that began in the capital yesterday.

According to sources, on the first day both sides at the meeting picked out non-implementation of the 1974 border treaty as the main problem for smooth border management.

The BDR delegation stressed quick implementation of the treaty. On the other hand, al-

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## Show cause on CEC, Alauddin, Swapan

By SC Correspondent

The High Court yesterday directed the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), Dr Mohammad Alauddin and Habibur Rahman Swapan to show cause why the CEC order vacating the parliament seats of two MPs shall not be declared passed without lawful authority and of no legal effect.

The CEC passed the order on October 11 that the parliament seats of Alauddin and Swapan stand vacated with "immediate effect."

The court also asked them to show cause why the drawing of salaries, allowances, other benefits received by Dr Alauddin and Swapan as ministers to the

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### Bashar's ton puts Bangladesh in command

From Hasan Masood

Chittagong, Oct 25: Habibur Bashar went into the record books in a grandiose fashion when he scored an unbeaten 143 against England A today, the highest score by a Bangladeshi in the history of cricket.

The stylish batsman, who has been in and out of the national team, finally unearthed the richest vein of his talent when he scored his maiden ton like a man possessed.

It was a delight for the be- holder as he cut, drove, nudged, pulled and pushed in tandem with the beating of drums from a strong 20,000 port city home crowd to reach the cherished three-figures mark.

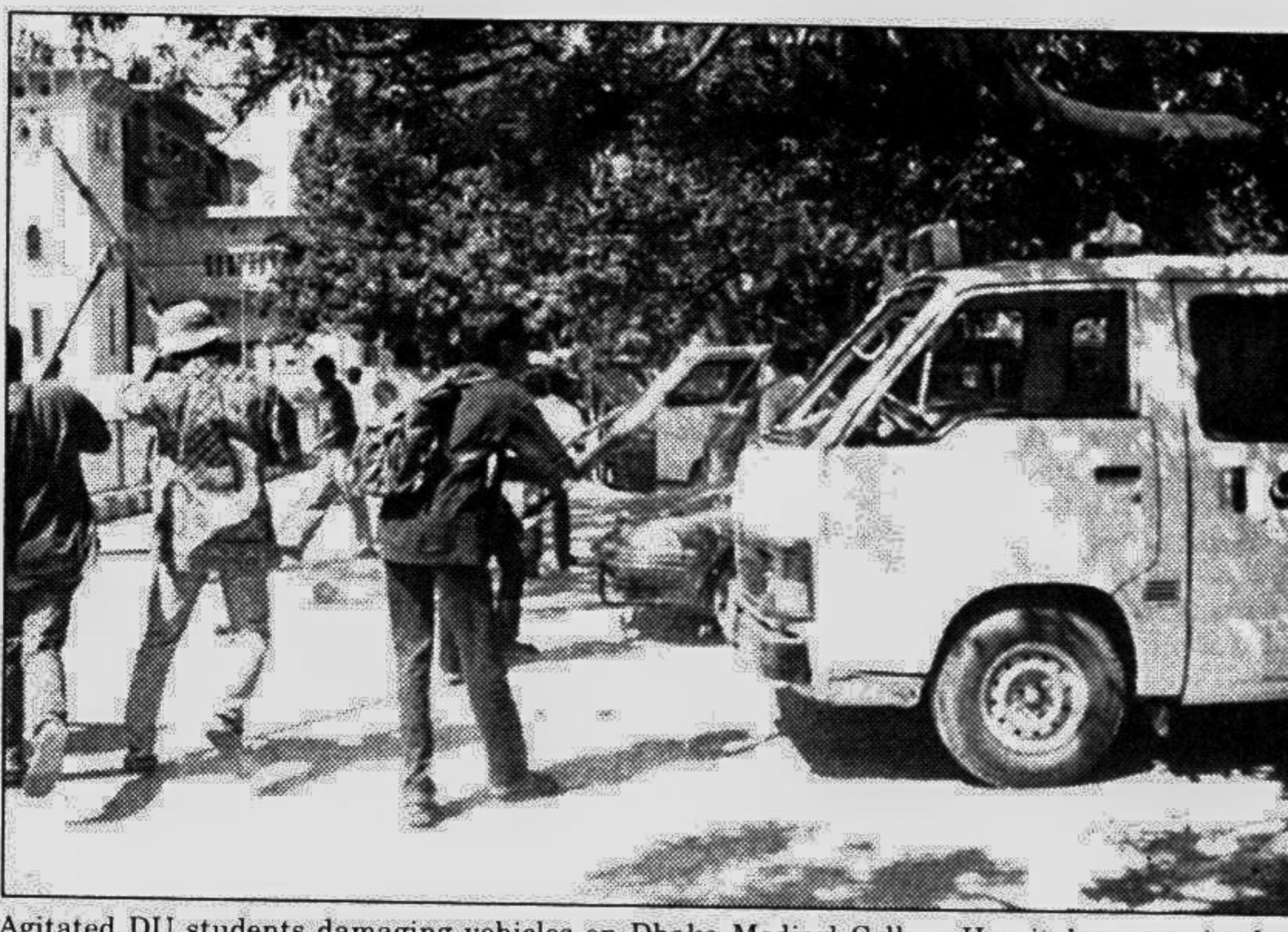
Bashar's bashing helped

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by Dr Alauddin and Swapan during their tenure shall not be declared without lawful authority and why they shall not be directed to refund the salaries, allowances and other benefits to the state exchequer.

The division bench comprising Justice Mainur Reza Chowdhury and Justice M A Aziz further directed the Secretary, Cabinet Division and Secretary, Parliament Secretariat to submit all records relating to salaries, allowances and other benefits received by Dr Alauddin and Swapan as ministers to the

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Agitated DU students damaging vehicles on Dhaka Medical College Hospital campus in the city yesterday.

— Star photo

### Dumping of waste

## Mir Nasir lodges case accusing Mohiuddin

CHITTAGONG, Oct 25: City BNP President Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin today lodged an FIR with Kotwali Thana accusing CCC Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury of dumping garbage in front of his house, reports UNB.

Huge quantity of garbage has been dumped in front of the ex-mayor's Gazi Shah Lane residence on Sunday and was not removed till this evening.

The BNP leader, however, requested CCC Secretary Salaiman Chowdhury over telephone to remove the filth from the area.

Meanwhile, activists of City BNP and Uttar Zilla BNP gheraoed the City Corporation office for half-an-hour in the evening demanding immediate removal of the garbage.

The organisations also jointly held a protest rally at the Nasimon Bhaban and brought out a procession.

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### Over 70 vehicles damaged

## DU student's death at DMCH sparks violent protest: 10 injured

By DU Correspondent

Several hundred students of Dhaka University yesterday went on the rampage on the Dhaka Medical College Hospital campus protesting the death of a fellow student due to alleged negligence of doctors.

At least 10 students were injured in a chase and counter chase between the DU students and a section of DMCH employees.

The students damaged about 70 vehicles parked on the campus, police and witnesses said.

Some doctors were also injured when they tried to resist the students from damaging their cars. DMCH Director Brig (retd) Badrul Manir claimed while talking to The Daily Star later.

Trouble began when some employees from inside the DMCH threw brick bats on the students who were then burning effigies of doctors at the Shahid Minar at about 11:30 am.

The agitated students started damaging parked motor vehicles.