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Top 20 loan defaulters

Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria yesterday presented in Parliament the list of top 20 bank loan defaulters of the country, reports UNB.

He also told the House that the total default loan till June 30 this year stood at Tk 23,711 crore.

The top 20 defaulters are: Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (Tk 603.43 crore), Chittagong Steel Mills Ltd (Tk 542.49 crore), BADC (Tk 206.19 crore), Emdadul Haq Bhuiyan (Tk 163.39 crore), Solitech International Ltd (Tk 135.17 crore), Adamjee Jute Mills Ltd (Tk 113.36 crore), Dhaka City Corporation (Tk 112.75 crore), Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory Ltd (Tk 111.69 crore), BEXIMCO Ltd (Tk 76.95 crore), Rupali Tannery (Tk 60.21 crore), Delta Millers Ltd (Tk 60.21), Bangladesh Solvent Oil Ltd (Tk 59.50), Khaleq Textile Mills Ltd (Tk 57.89 crore), Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (Tk 56.74 crore), Mahbub Leather Complex (Tk 55.91 crore), Mannan Brothers Ltd (Tk 55.47 crore), Munshi Textile Complex Ltd (Tk 50.16 crore), Dhaka Vegetable Oil Industries (Tk 49.95 crore), Dhaka Match Industries Ltd (Tk 48.99 crore) and AB Vegetable Oil Industries Ltd (Tk 48.65 crore).

Schedules for Dec 8 bypolls in 3 JS seats

By Staff Correspondent

By-elections in three seats of Jatiya Sangsad — Rajshahi-5, Sirajganj-7 and Kishoreganj-1 — will be held on December 8.

The Election Commission announced schedules for the three by-elections yesterday afternoon.

Candidates have to file nominations to the Returning Officers or the Assistant Returning Officers on or before November 19, while the nomination papers will be scrutinised on November 11.

The last date of withdrawing candidature is November 18.

Deputy Commissioners concerned will perform the responsibilities of Returning Officers while TNOs of Assistant Returning Officers.

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Onion price soars again

By Staff Correspondent

Prices of essentials in the city's kitchen markets are on the rise. Despite the recent duty relief on import of onion, its prices soared further.

With the advent of the winter, many seasonal vegetables and cabbages found their way to vendors' showcases in different kitchen markets in the capital. But their prices are beyond the purchasing power of most of the consumers.

Sellers attributed the price hike to a number of reasons including the recent strike by truckers in India, rain-damaged vegetables in some northern districts, political turmoil and seasonal fluctuations.

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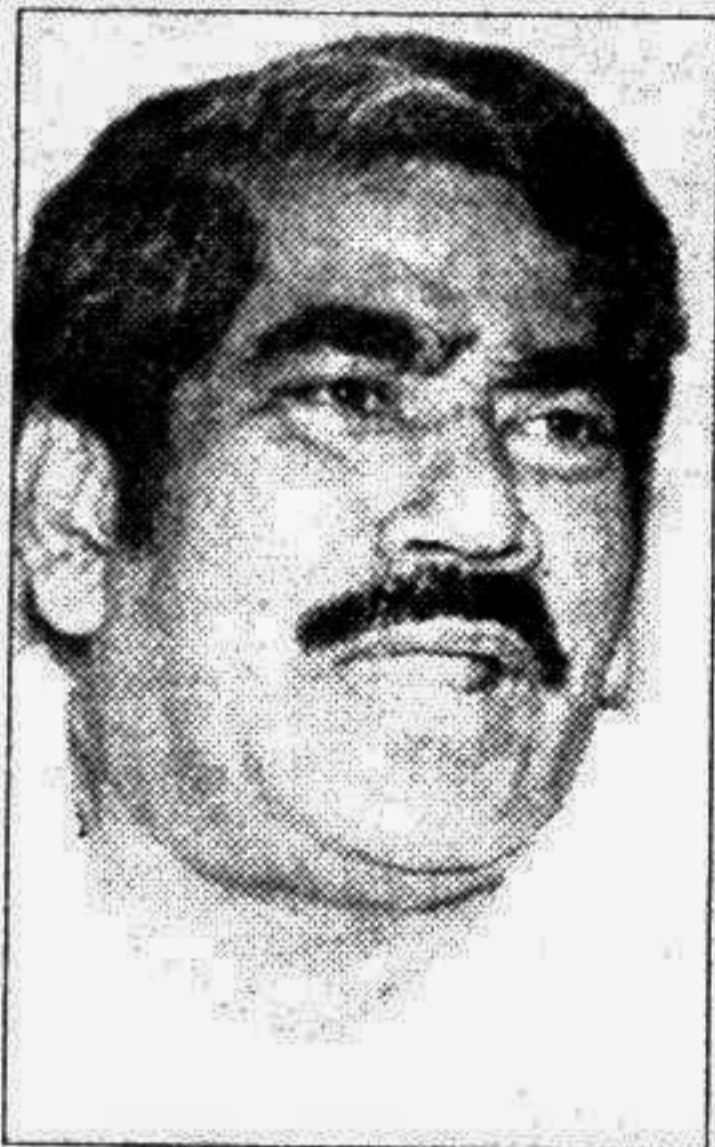
Prayer Timings

November 3

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-10	5-40
Zohr	12-45	1-20
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-29	5-34
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Kazi Zafar gets 15-year RI in corruption case



Kazi Zafar Ahmed

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Nov 2: Former prime minister Kazi Zafar Ahmed has been sentenced to 15 years' rigorous imprisonment and fined Tk 10 lakh for misappropriating wheat and rice worth Tk 10 lakh which were allocated under food-for-work programme.

The verdict was pronounced today by Mohammad Azizul Haq, Khulna Divisional Special Judge upon a case filed by the District Anti-corruption Bureau with Digholia thana on January 30, 1994.

Three persons including Kazi Zafar Ahmed were accused in the case. The verdict was given in absentia.

Kazi Zafar had surrendered to Khulna Divisional Special Judge's Court after taking bail from the High Court in 1995. At one stage of the trial, he fled

the country for which the court cancelled his bail and declared him an absconder.

The court also issued a warrant of arrest against him.

The prosecution story in brief is that Kazi Zafar, while he was prime minister, had allocated the rice and wheat during 1989-90 financial year for earth-filling of low-lying lands for establishing a cancer hospital at Digholia thana.

Kazi Zafar made a commitment in a public meeting in October, 1989 that he would donate 100 bighas of land for establishment of the proposed hospital. But in fact 48 out of the 100 bighas of land belonged to his father.

"His commitment to establish a cancer hospital was nothing but a forgery. He made the

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Flag meeting today

BDR, BSF exchange fire in Sunamganj

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Nov 2: Tension has been prevailing in three bordering areas of Sunamganj district since last night after BDR and BSF exchanged several rounds of gunshots.

The incident occurred following capture of an Indian police officer and a police constable by the BDR jawans when they intruded into Bangladesh territory along with a truck for snatching away some coal seized by the BDR earlier, sources said.

Battalion Commander of BDR, Sunamganj, Lt. Col. Wahed is now staying at the Chandpur border along with troops. The border is about 40 kilometres off the district headquarters and has no direct road or river communication.

The trouble began at about 5-30 pm yesterday near Chandpur BOP when some Indian nationals smuggled 412 bags of coal into the Bangladesh territory and dumped those 100 yards, inside the Bangladesh border.

Immediately, the BDR seized the coal while the smugglers managed to escape.

At about 8-30 pm, the officer-in-charge of Barchhara police station in India and a constable entered the Bangladesh territory along with a truck and tried to take the coal back. When the patrolling BDR jawans prevented them, the police officer became agitated and tried to open fire. The BDR men

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PM unveils defence plan in parliament

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in Parliament yesterday unveiled her government's comprehensive defence plan for a modern and powerful armed forces to safeguard national sovereignty from any external attack, reports UNB.

The plan envisages a new army brigade in Sylhet to strengthen the defence system of the eastern frontier district. purchase of eight MIG-29, one modern naval frigate, two patrol boats, one action speed technical trainer, four C-130 transport planes and four L-39 training aircraft.

During the PM's question time, Hasina produced a list of the defence modernisation plan

in response to a question from Col (ret'd) Farooq Khan (AL-Gopalganj).

She said, a composite Brigade comprising one Infantry Battalion, one Air Defence Regiment and one riverine Engineer Battalion was set up in the Bangabandhu Bridge area to protect it from external attack during any war.

An engineering construction battalion was also formed to build roads in remote areas in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, she informed Parliament.

Under the army modernisation plan, the Prime Minister said one Division Support Battalion, one Division Locating

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BNP holds rally protesting police attack on newsmen

By Staff Correspondent

A procession of a few hundred militant BNP activists, led by some senior leaders and party MPs, yesterday broke through a police barricade at the Paltan crossing and held a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club to protest police "attack" on journalists in the city during Monday's countrywide hartal.

Holding of rally on the road in front of the Press Club is banned.

The procession had started from Mukhtangan after a rally there in the afternoon, organised by the city BNP, also to protest police "attack" on journalists and party activists. It was obstructed in front of Paltan police box by a huge contingent of riot police.

Police had allowed a Ja-

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Japanese ODA team in city to monitor programmes

By Staff Correspondent

A Japanese ODA team arrived in Dhaka yesterday to monitor the implementation of the Japanese Government's Official Development Assistance (ODA) programmes.

The nine-member team comprising housewives, businessmen and social workers represents Japanese tax-payers in checking assistance in the developing countries and will report to their government and people, said a press release issued by the Embassy of Japan yesterday.

The team will monitor the projects, including Meghna

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Jail Killing Day today

By Staff Correspondent

The nation will observe today the 24th anniversary of the infamous killings of four national leaders inside the Dhaka Central Jail. The day has since been dubbed the 'Jail Killing Day'.

Four celebrated sons of the soil and leaders of the War of Liberation — Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, AHM Qamruzzaman and Captain Mansur Ali — were killed inside the jail on this day in 1975.

The brutal killings of the na-

tional leaders took place less than three months after the assassination of the nation's founding father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and almost all his family members in a military putsch on August 15 that year.

In observance of the day, the ruling Awami League will organise various programmes in the city and elsewhere in the country today.

The AL will hold a commemorative meeting at Paltan

Maidan this afternoon which is scheduled to be addressed by Prime Minister and party chief Sheikh Hasina.

ADDs: A case was filed with the Lalbagh thana a day after the brutal killing of the four national leaders in Dhaka Central Jail. The post-75 governments did not take any initiative to try the killers till 1996.

However, the Awami League after coming to power in 1996

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BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia visiting a stall at BATEXPO '99 in the city yesterday. — Star photo

More depressions likely this month

One or two more depressions are likely in the Bay of Bengal this month, which may intensify into cyclonic storm.

The prediction came at a meeting of weather experts who reviewed the situation and held that the temperature in the Bay was high enough to form depression. Temperature in the Bay yesterday was recorded at 26.5 degree Celsius.

Director of the Storm Warning Centre Ershad Hossain told UNB that depression during this month is very usual and it is likely this year as well because of high temperature in the Bay.

He said a low was located yesterday in west-central Bay and its adjoining areas, which formed two days ago.

Govt forced us to take to streets: Khaleda

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday assured ready-made garment exporters that her party would not take up any political programme that would affect the nation.

"We do not have any desire to take up programme which will create obstacles to wellbeing of the poor," she said while addressing as chief guest the concluding session of BATEXPO-99 at Sonargaon Hotel in the city.

"We want to see congenial atmosphere in every sector and continuation of production and development process. But gov-

ernment's provocative actions forced us to take to streets," she said.

She mentioned different steps taken during her tenure for growth of the ready-made garments sector and assured her party's all out cooperation for growth of all industrial sectors.

"Killing and attacking leaders and workers of opposition political parties, filing of false cases against them, obstructing peaceful rallies and hartals can not be acts of a democratic government," she said.

"Parliamentary democracy is at stake, country's borders

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Two policemen shot by armed goons: 5 held

By Staff Correspondent

Two police constables of Tejgaon police station were shot by armed goons in front of PWD office at Agargaon in the city yesterday afternoon.

The incident took place when a squad of plainclothesmen from Tejgaon thana intercepted the gangsters at Rokeya Sarani at around 1pm. The gangsters were trying to get out of the PWD office sensing presence of police. Constables Abdul Khaleq and Rafiq were injured when the goons fired at them in a bid to avoid arrest, witnesses said.

Five of the gangsters were arrested while one managed to speed away with a microbus. The arrested are Mahbubur Rahman Zulu, Jahir Haider Khan, Md Tara Miah, Mahfuzur Rahman and Saiful Islam Khan. Police however, failed to give the number of the microbus.

Khaleq received bullet in his chest and abdomen and was admitted to Combined Military Hospital (CMH). Rafiq sustained wounds in his chest and left leg and was sent to the National Institute of Cardio-Vascular Diseases, police said. They were operated upon immediately.

Of the arrested, Zulu is an accused in the ward commissioner Shahabuddin murder case while the others are involved in criminal activities as paid agents, police said.

Barricade demanding arrest of killers

By Staff Correspondent

Traffic was disrupted for more than an hour when supporters of a murdered Jubo League Leader Mashur Rahman Shimul put-up barricade on the Airport Road yesterday demanding immediate arrest of the culprits responsible for the killing on Saturday.

Vehicles on Airport Road which connect the Northern districts with the capital remained stranded for over an hour from 12:00 noon, according to witnesses.

About one thousand people put up the barricade on the road and burnt tyres at different points of the road.

Police took more than an hour to restore traffic movement on the road. When contacted Uttara police said that the disruption continued for 15 minutes.

Shimul was shot dead by unidentified assailants in front of the Friends Club in Uttara on October 30.

The agitators withdrew the barricade when the police officials assured them of immediate arrest of the culprits.

Shimul's mother lodged a case accusing eight but none was arrested.

One held after gunfight with police in city

By Staff Correspondent

A notorious criminal and phensidyl trader was arrested after a gunfight with policemen in the city's Gopibagh area yesterday afternoon.

The arrested was identified as Abdur Razzak Alias China, police said. China is wanted in 16 cases including constable Mohsin murder.

Constable Mohsin was shot dead when a gang of armed goons from TT Fara and nearby slums attacked the police camp near the Gopibagh rail crossing after arrest of two accomplices of China on August 6 this year.

China is also the prime accused in the case involving the biggest ever phensidyl haul. Seventeen thousand phensidyl bottles were recovered from an underground tunnel in Gopibagh area during demolition of slums there.

Earlier, police arrested Raja, an accomplice of China from the city's Paltan area. Raja is also an accused in the constable murder case.

On the basis of Raja's information, Motijheel police yesterday raided the residence of China's sister at the Sixth Lane

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Tayabee murder: Chargesheet against 8 Nov 7

CHITTAGONG, Nov 2: Eight people including son of an industrialist of the port city have been named in the chargesheet in Indian national Zibran Tayabee murder case, police sources said, reports UNB.

CID ASP Abdul Kader Khan who investigated the murder is likely to submit the chargesheet on November 7.

A group of miscreants shot dead Tayabee, son of IG Police of West Bengal, near Chung King Chinese Restaurant in Agrabad when he was going to his official residence at Kulshi in a car on June 9 this year.

Newly appointed docs at CMCH, CMC observe 6-hr strike

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Nov 2: Seventy-nine newly appointed doctors at Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) and Chittagong Medical College (CMC) enforced a six-hour strike from 9 am today demanding immediate payment of their arrears.

The indoor and outdoor patients of the hospital suffered a lot as the doctors did not attend them during the strike.

The agitating doctors also locked the administrative building, disrupting activities of the hospital.

The doctors under the banner of the council for the physicians working at the newly created parts also observed a day-long strike yesterday on the same demand.

BNP compromises itself

By Nazmul Ashraf

The next opposition-sponsored hartal on November 7-8 coincides with several occasions including the one that is directly related to the origin of politics pursued by BNP and its allies.

A shutdown planned by BNP on November 7 will mark a major deviation from the two-decade-old practice for the party that draws inspiration from the 1975 events and the "spirit" of the developments dubbed a "sepooy-people revolution".

It also coincides with the Kaali Pya of the Hindus, which falls on November 7 this year. Finally, the two-day shutdown clashes with the annual examination schedules of many schools.

Most schools have also to reschedule their examinations planned for November 7-8.

Another occasion is the reason for calling the hartal itself. The BNP, along with its allies,

has said the 48-hour shutdown is targeted to thwart the December 6 mayoral polls, which they have vowed to boycott. The general strike is primarily designed to coincide with the final days of fielding candidates for the city polls in Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi.

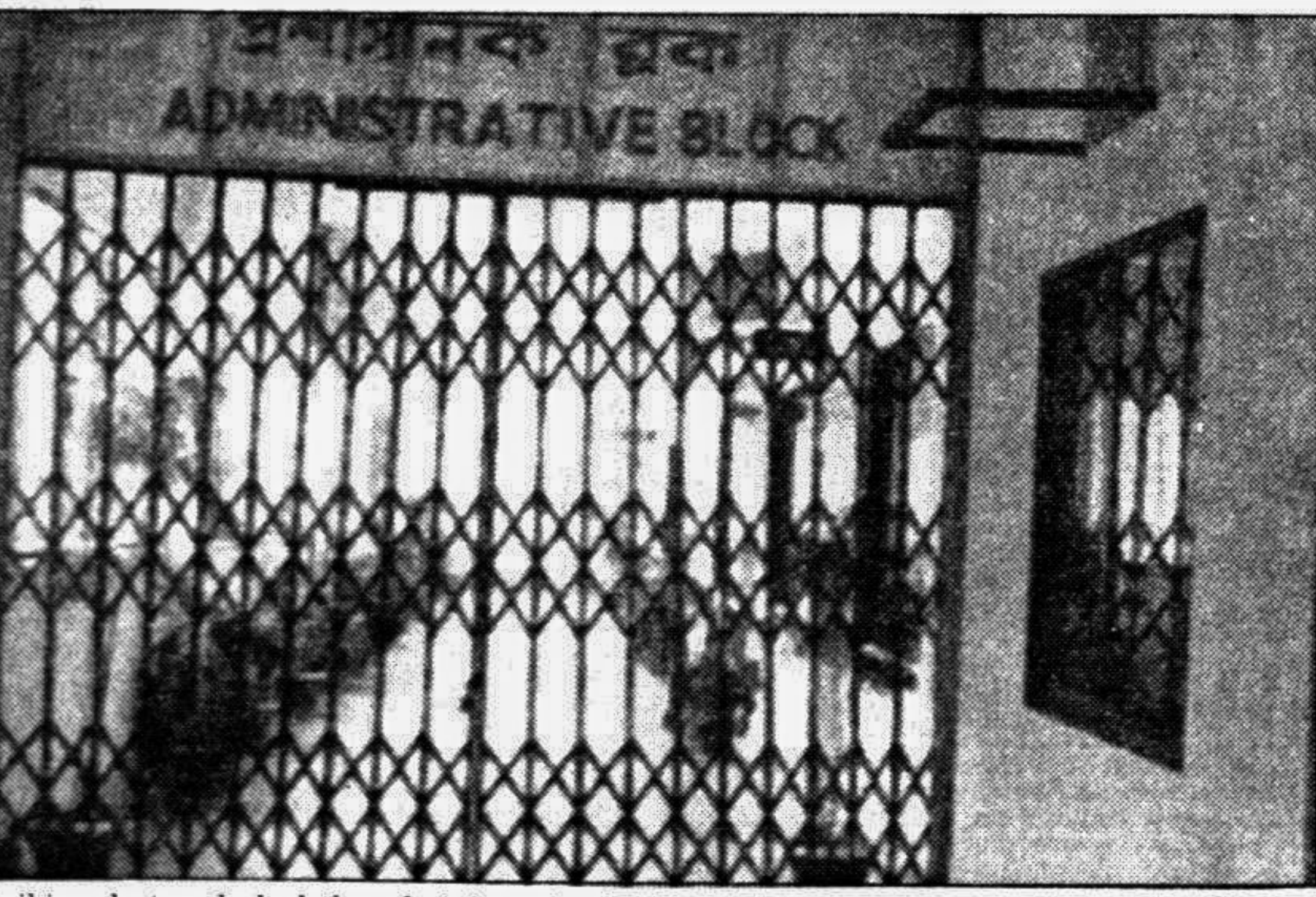
BNP, this year, has not taken up any programmes for November 7, observed officially as the National Revolution and Solidarity Day until 1995.

This year, the government dropped the day from the list of public holidays. The BNP responded angrily to the government decision when the list of holidays was published at the beginning of the year.

BNP is however justifying its decision to enforce hartal on the day this year.

"We declare November 7 a private holiday by calling hartal on the day," BNP Secretary

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Striking doctors locked the administration building of CMCH yesterday. — Star photo

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