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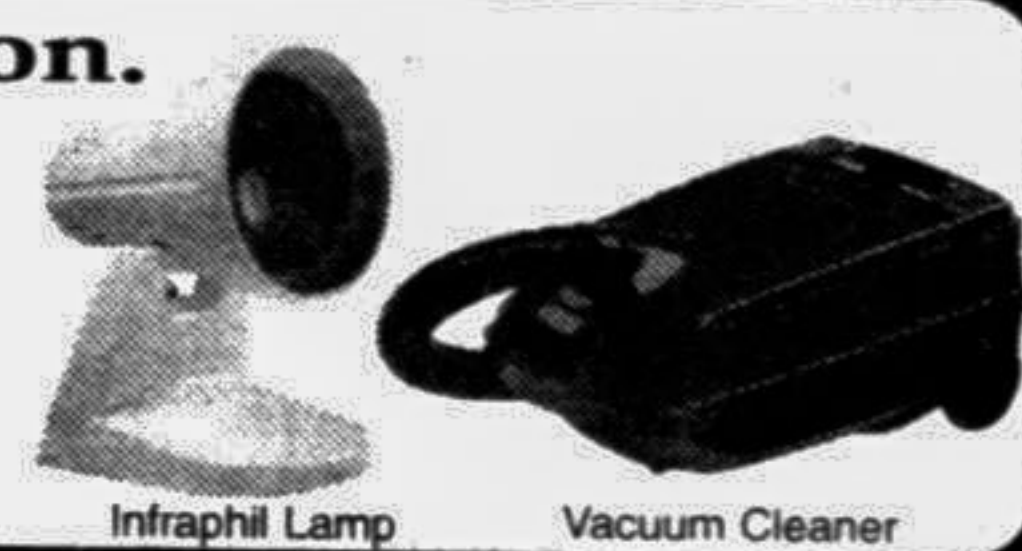
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Westmont failed for lack of gas converter

By Staff Correspondent

The Westmont Baghabari barge-mounted private power plant has been shut down early this week as the company failed to set up its fuel facilities as per agreement with the Power Development Board (PDB).

Sources said that in addition to the company's failure to install a gas pressure converter system at the power plant to use cheap local gas as its raw material, Westmont could not supply the amount of power as per agreement in the last three months.

A PDB source said that Westmont was supposed to set up a 90 MW plant. But its plant was actually generating maximum 83 MW power till it was shut down.

Besides, the Westmont plant was set up, for a 15 year term, at an unauthorised and awkward location near the Baghabari inland port. Sources said that due to the installation of the plant there, instead of a PDB recommended site, future expansion plan of the country's only inland port has been jeopardised.

The Malaysian company that built the power plant was commissioned three months ago. Since then, the PDB was supplying it with tax-free im-

ported fuel oil as the plant's raw material for a three months period. After this period, Westmont was supposed to equip this plant with a gas pressure converter to use gas as its raw material.

According to insiders, Westmont could not arrange the gas converter during the stipulated period due to lack of finance. The gas conversion system requires an investment of around 20 million dollars, sources pointed out.

The gas converter was necessary because the local gas is supplied at a pressure of "150 PGSI" while the Westmont plant requires a gas pressure of 350 PGSI.

"We can no longer afford Westmont's fuel supply, by subsidising its imported fuel, we are incurring a huge loss," said a PDB source. "Besides, Westmont's power was as costly as 8 US cents per unit, whereas, other barge mount plants charge 5.5 cents and our sales rate is around 5 cents."

The source added that once Westmont's plant started using gas, the power tariff would come down below 5 cents per unit.

Where have the arms gone?

By Staff Correspondent

Workers found an 'arms cache' during demolition of the bridge at Road-32 in Dhanmondi in the city almost a year ago, but did not hand over the 'entire lot' of the arms to the police, LGED sources said.

At first 'a pistol with bullets' was found during the demolition. One of the workers went to the nearby police post and handed over the gun to the police. But police held the man until the LGED officials bailed him out, the sources said.

After the incident, none of the workers or others who found more arms at the site bothered to hand those over to the police, an LGED official said.

The officer-in-charge of Dhanmondi thana said that he would have to check the files to see how many arms were deposited. "As far as I can remember, we found a 303 rifle with bullets in the lake near Road-5 several months ago," the OC said.

3 alleged muggers held in city

By Staff Correspondent

Three alleged muggers were arrested from the city's Dhanmondi area yesterday afternoon.

Dhanmondi police arrested them while they were passing through the road in front of Bangabandhu museum at about 2:30 pm, police said. They were accused of mugging gold ornaments and other valuables.

Sergeant Khairullah led the operation and arrested the alleged muggers chasing their authoritarians in which they were traveling.

Earlier on October 28, sergeant Ahad Parvez was stabbed to death by the muggers when he chased a gang fleeing in a tempo near the Shapla Chattar at Motijheel in the city. The arrested were identified as Sukkur Miah, 25, Selim, 28 and Rana 28. A gold chain and knives were recovered from them.

Hartal observed protesting arrest of 'Chora' Aziz

By Staff Correspondent

A half-day hartal was observed yesterday at Dholaikhal under Sutrapur thana in the city protesting the arrest of Aziz, a local BNP leader.

He was arrested on Tuesday on charge of trading in smuggled motor vehicle spares.

The hartal was peaceful, Sutrapur police said. Aziz, wanted in 18 cases lodged with different police stations in the city, was produced before the CMM's court yesterday, police said.

When contacted, Sadek Hussain Khoka, Convener of Dhaka city BNP told The Daily Star that police brought fabricated charges against Aziz only to tarnish his image.

The 'peaceful hartal' hartal shows his 'popularity' in the area, Khoka said and demanded his immediate release.

After his arrest at about 8 pm on Tuesday, Aziz locally known as 'Chora' (thief) Aziz, was taken to Motijheel police station for 'safety reasons', police said.

His arrest sparked off violent protest in the area since Tuesday night. Some shops were ransacked and tyres burnt on some streets in the area.

Power sector

From page 1

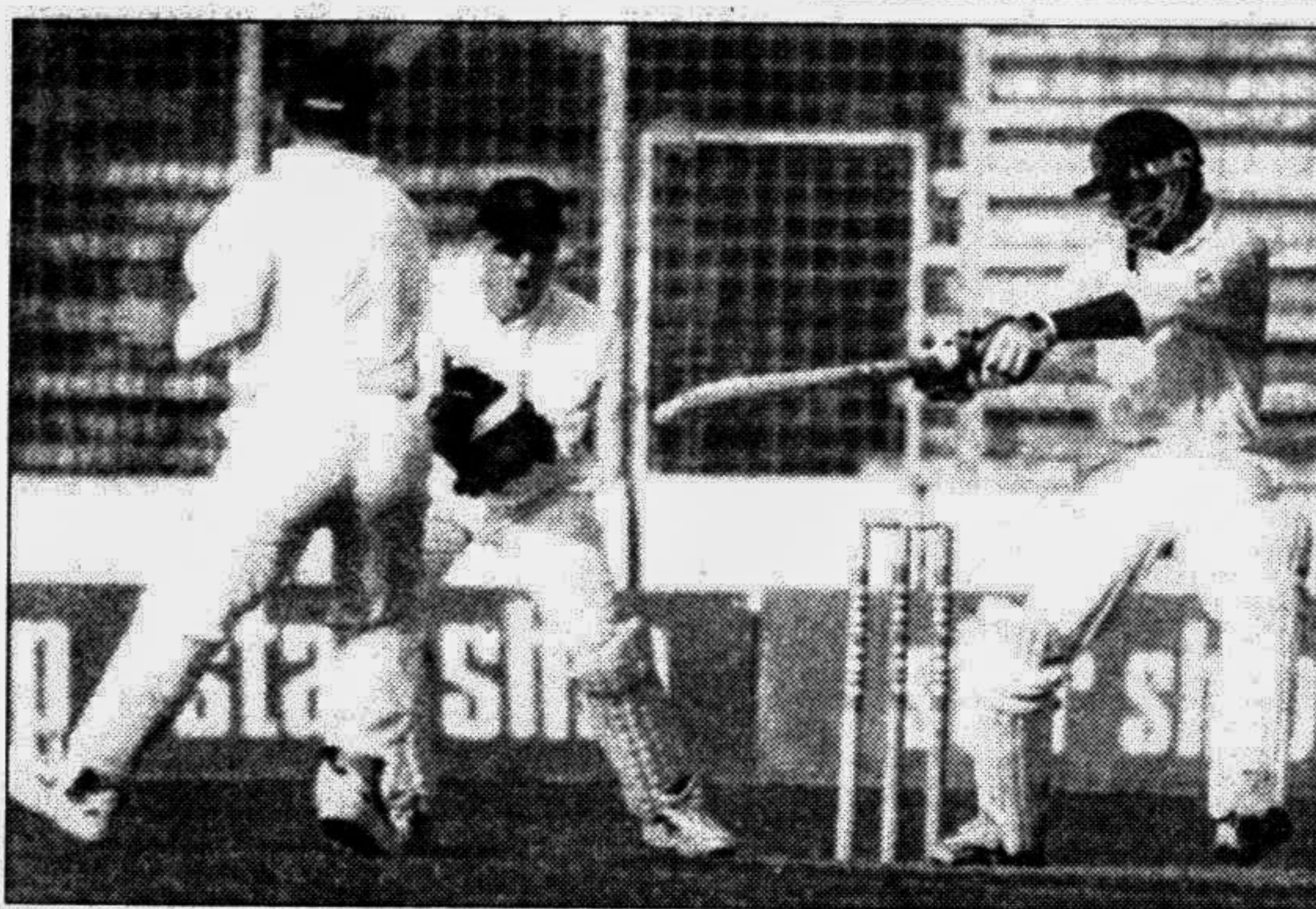
It will also supervise management and administration of affairs of licensees and look into consumer disputes and unfair trade practices. It will adjudicate disputes and differences among the licensees and between the licensees and consumers as per provisions of the Act.

Besides, the commission will also co-ordinate with environmental regulatory agencies for healthy growth of the power sector without degrading the environment and regulate development and operation of renewable energy and nuclear power plants.

The Act also paves way for setting up a new company — Ashuganj Power Company — that will be owned by the Power Development Board (PDB). The company will own the five power plants built by the PDB with German assistance, which are currently generating 568 MW of power.

The company will sell power from these plants to PDB. It will bear the maintenance costs from its earnings.

All PDB owned power plants are now dependent on budgetary approval for their maintenance. As the process is slow, no power plant actually receives timely finances for maintenance.



Bangladesh batsman Al-Shahriar executes an exquisite square-cut during his brilliant knock of 73 against England A at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

— Star photo by Amran Hossain

Sinha: Hartal

From page 1

ding export business of Sonali Bank, made at a press conference earlier, was correct. He contradicted the bank's statement made at a recent board meeting with finance ministry.

BGMEA earlier claimed that SB's export business dropped to Tk 700 crore in the first seven months of current fiscal year from Tk 2001 in the last fiscal year, mainly due to its 'non-cooperation' with garments exporters. But the SB told the finance ministry at the recent meeting that it did Tk 3687 crore export business in the last fiscal year and Tk 909 crore in the first seven months of this fiscal.

"It (SB) realised our problems and came up with fresh proposals after we drew government's attention regarding non-cooperation by banks," Sinha claimed.

He hoped that more than 100 closed garments factories will be able to start business soon if Sonali Bank reschedules their loans as per a Bangladesh Bank directive.

Sinha reiterated his earlier demand for setting up of an apparel board, allocation of land for a Garments Palli near Dhaka-Chittagong highway, improvement of goods handling system at ports and round the week bank, customs and port facilities.

Sinha said Bangladesh ready-made garments will enter into Japanese and Australian markets soon. Australia is considering offering zero tariff facility to Bangladeshi garments. Access to the Japanese market needs some technological and qualitative improvement, Sinha observed.

Canada urged to raise garments quota, ODA for Bangladesh

OTTAWA, Nov 3: Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad

hoped that volume of bilateral trade between Dhaka and Ottawa would be expanded further and called his counterpart to help enhance the readymade garments quota for Bangladesh to facilitate better market access, reports BSS.

He was leading a bilateral talks with Canadian Foreign Minister Moyd Axworthy here yesterday. Bangladesh High Commissioner to Canada M Aminul Islam and Director General SK Sharif Hassan, Canadian Foreign Minister's Special Assistant Ms S Christanson, Assistant Deputy Minister Joseph Caron and Deputy Director, South Asia Division Ben Gallor were present.

Axworthy assured Azad of considering the request. Azad said that relations and contacts between the two countries were established by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman when he visited Canada in 1973 to attend the Commonwealth Summit.

He briefed his counterpart of the programmes undertaken by the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina especially how the democratic institution and rule of law are being established by her government.

On economic assistance, Azad appreciating Canada's contribution to the developmental activities of Bangladesh and urged the Canadian Minis-

ter to increase Canadian ODA.

The Canadian Foreign Minister assured that his government would consider more assistance to Bangladesh from next year.

The foreign minister stressed the need for annual consultation at the Foreign Secretary level and regular exchange of high level visits. He extended invitation to his counterpart to visit Bangladesh and also conveyed the invitation of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh to the Canadian Prime Minister.

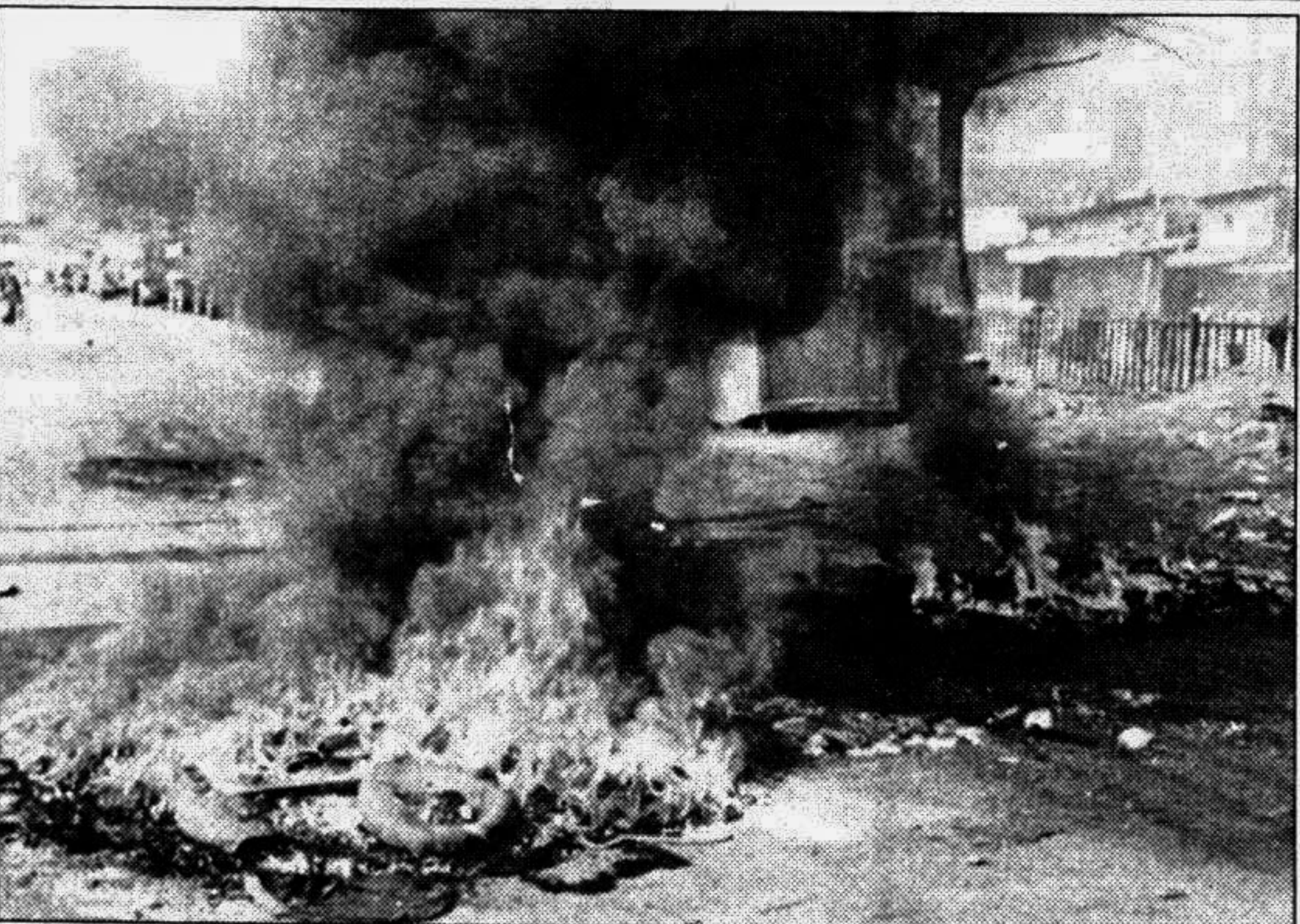
Arrested Indian policemen freed

SUNAMGANJ, Nov 3: Bangladesh Rifles today freed

the arrested OC and a sepoy of Babachara police station of Indian State of Meghalaya following a flag meeting here with the Indian Border Security Force, reports UNB.

BDR arrested OC Ling Pai and constable B Hana when they entered the Bangladesh territory to get released a truck seized with smuggled coal from India, triggering exchange of fire between the border guards of the two countries.

The two policemen were freed at about 3 pm, officials said. The seized coal-loaded Indian truck will be handed over to Sunamganj customs authorities, they said.



Supporters of 'Chora' Aziz observed hartal setting fire to tyres in Dholaikhal area in the old part of the city yesterday.

— Star photo

Pak military ruler orders crackdown on corruption

ISLAMABAD, Nov 3: Pakistan's military ruler General Pervez Musharraf said today loan defaulters will face jail terms under a crackdown on corruption starting this month, reports AFP.

"We will crackdown on the first group of people and things will start from November 17," Musharraf told the official Associated Press of Pakistan in an interview.

Musharraf, who overthrew prime minister Nawaz Sharif in a bloodless coup on October 12, has put the assault on corruption high on his agenda.

The general has promised to set up new courts to handle corruption cases and has encouraged people to inform authorities about abuses.

He said the courts would be ready by November 17 and lists of suspects were now being drawn up.

"Maybe we'll put them be-

hind bars, they should be prepared," he told the state news agency.

"They should not think that we are in any way lacking in resolve. They will see immediate action on November 17."

Much of the corruption in Pakistan stems from loan defaulters, who borrowed from banks with little or no collateral and siphoned the money away, sometimes into overseas bank accounts.

"We have seen the total lists of defaulters and plunderers. There are many kinds of plunderers, and I will call them plunderers of the national wealth," Musharraf said.

"There are people who have manipulated rules and regulations and made money."

On Monday Musharraf said just 322 people in Pakistan held around 210 billion rupees (around four billion dollars), one third of the national budget.

AP adds: The second mili-

tary man declared his family's assets today following the example set by Gen Musharraf.

Pakistan's Navy Chief Admiral Abdul Aziz Mirza said he owns three residential plots and agriculture land, according to a statement issued by the navy.

His wife owns an apartment in the capital of Islamabad and a piece of agriculture land, it said. Their combined bank balance, jewelry and investments is 1.5 million rupees (27,777 dollar), it said.

Musharraf released details of his assets on Monday saying it was the first step toward cleaning out a corrupt system.

Musharraf has vowed to wage a fierce cleanup campaign to recover bad bank loans and illicit wealth.

He offered to start the ball rolling by revealing his assets, which included several pieces of property in rural and urban areas of the country.

Silver Jubilee celebration Dhaka elected member of IDB board of EDs

From M Anwarul Haq

JEDDAH, Nov 3: Bangladesh has been elected a member of the Board of Executive Directors of Islamic Development Bank (IDB).

Muhammad Sayef Uddin, Joint Secretary of the External Resources Division (ERD), today received consensus support of the IDB Board of Governors in getting elected to the coveted position.

The Bangladesh nominee will serve for a three-year term. The election of Bangladesh to the decision-making Board coincides with the on-going Silver Jubilee celebrations of the IDB, set up in 1978 by the 55-member Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC).

The IDB has a 14-member Board of Directors, of whom seven are nominated by the largest contributors to the Bank and the other seven are elected from among other members.

Hundreds of representatives from the OIC countries including several finance, planning and commerce ministers, leading government and private financial experts are in Jeddah, where OIC and IDB are headquartered to attend the two-day silver-jubilee celebrations that began yesterday.

The Bangladesh delegation, led by ERD Secretary Dr Moshir Rahman, comprises senior officials and bankers Bangladesh Ambassador Abdul Momen Chowdhury and Consul General at Jeddah Abul Kalam

Azad are also attending the deliberations.

The ministers from the OIC countries and senior officials were taking the opportunity for bilateral talks for expanding economic cooperation and boosting trade among OIC countries. Seminars and conferences are being held here relating to strengthening of the other IDB and Islamic financial institutions.

Talking to The Daily Star Dr Moshir Rahman said the election of Bangladesh is a matter of great honour. Bangladesh is one of the founding members of IDB.

Muhammad Sayef Uddin said Bangladesh has so far received over one billion US dollars from the IDB for project and import financing.

Dr Ahmed Muhammad Ali, Long time President of IDB, while inaugurating the celebrations yesterday said the Bank is introducing for the first time a fund to support the private sector. It will have a capital of one billion US dollars.

Prime Minister of Lebanon Saleem Al-Hoss spoke of the immense contribution of IDB in consolidating cooperation among the member countries.

Dr Azizine Laraki, Secretary General of the OIC, said the IDB has been able to prove itself as a leading global financial institution and has been able to create a new impetus in the world of Islamic banking.

Oct 13-14 strike DU in dilemma over holding fresh exams

By DU Correspondent

The Dhaka University authorities are in a dilemma whether to hold second year Honours examinations of all students afresh or only of those who could not appear at examinations on October 13-14 due to strike on the campus.

Ganotantik Chhatra Oikya (Democratic Student Alliance) and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) had separately called strike at the DU on the two days to press their respective demands.

All the DU units of student organisations including Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) are now demanding holding of examinations which were scheduled for October 13-14.

When contacted, Vice-chancellor Prof. AK Azad Chowdhury said a decision regarding the strike will be taken at a meeting of the Academic Council, the date for which is yet to be fixed.

A good number of second year students could not turn up for their annual examinations on October 13-14 due to the strike and many of those who appeared recorded their attendance only, sources on the campus had said earlier. But the DU authorities had claimed that the turn out was satisfactory.

Some top officials of the university, when contacted, however observed that all examinations which were scheduled for October 13-14 should be held afresh to avoid further disturbance on the campus.

Maksud sent to jail

By Staff Correspondent

Popular vocalist Maksudul Haq, who was arrested by Pallabi Police on charges of beating his wife on Tuesday, was granted bail yesterday.

Maksud, however, was sent to the Dhaka Central Jail since his bail bond could not be furnished within the specified time limit yesterday.

Maksud was arrested from his own house at Pallabi in the city Tuesday noon on charge of beating his wife. Her wife had lodged the case. Pallabi police said.

Tanguar Haor to be declared as Ramsar Site

Environment Secretary Syed Marghub Murshed has assured all of the government move to declare the ecologically threatened Tanguar Haor as a Ramsar site, reports BSS.

He said that four critical ecosystems including Hakaluki Haor and St. Martin's Island have already been declared as environmentally critical areas (ECAs) for ensuring the conservation of the same.

Marghub Murshed was inaugurating a progress review workshop on community based haor and floodplain resource management jointly organised by Environment Ministry, UNDP and IUCN in the city on Thursday. UNDP assistant resident representative Shireen

Sayed, Sustainable Environment Management Programme (SEMP) coordinator Dr Mahfuzul Haque and IUCN Country Representative Dr Afnun Nishat also spoke.

JP (M-M) to take part in all polls

Jatiya Party (Mizan-Monju) has decided to participate in all by-polls and city corporation elections, a party press release said in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

The JP has invited applications from intending candidates to contest the by-polls in the vacant seats of Rajshahi-5, Sirajganj-7 and Kishoreganj-1 constituencies.

The candidates should collect application forms from its central office at Lalmitia in the city.

"The parliamentary board of the party will interview the candidates at 7 pm on November 8," the release added.

Meanwhile, the JP has also decided to participate in the Khulna, Rajshahi and Chittagong city corporation elections.

16 miscreants held in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Nov 3: Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) arrested 16 miscreants, including an alleged terrorist from different areas of the city today, reports BSS.

Panchalaish police arrested Pulak Biswas, 23, from Sulakbahar last night. He was wanted in five criminal cases, police said.

The 15 other accused were arrested from different areas of the city. They were arrested in criminal cases filed with different thanas in the city, police said.

Dacoity in city house

By Staff Correspondent

Dacoits took away gold ornaments, cash and other valuables worth about Tk 1.66 lakh from a house in the city's Free School Street under Dhanmondi thana in the early hours of yesterday.

A gang of about four robbers got inside the residence of one Abul Kalam Azad at about 2:30 am yesterday, and looted gold ornaments and other valuables at gunpoint, police said.

None, however, was arrested in this connection till last night. Abul Kalam Azad filed case with police in this regard yesterday.

Cancel election schedules for 3 city corps: GF

By Staff Correspondent

The Gano Forum has demanded immediate cancellation of the election schedules for the three city corporations and urged the Election Commission to re-schedule the polling date after consultation with all political parties.

The demand was raised at a discussion meeting of the party on the Jail Killing Day yesterday, says a press release. Gano Forum president member Pankaj Bhattacharya presided over the meeting.

Ctg BIT classes from Nov 14

CHITTAGONG, Nov 3: The classes of the first year (session 1998-99) of Bangladesh Institute of Technology (BIT) here will now begin on November 14 instead of November 7, a BIT press release said here today, reports BSS.

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