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EC likely to appeal against HC order

By Staff Correspondent

The Election Commission may appeal against the High Court order staying the election process of Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi city corporations, official sources said yesterday.

"The commission is likely to appeal against the stay order today," an EC official told The Daily Star last night.

The matter is under active consideration of the government, Attorney General Mahmudul Islam said yesterday, without confirming whether he would move against the High Court order today.

The HC also stayed operations of the final delimitation notifications of Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi city corporations following three writ petitions filed by six ward commissioners from three cities.

The HC stay order came on November 4, only four days ahead of the last day for filing nomination papers.

The BNP-led opposition alliance has threatened to resist the elections and called 42-hour hartal from November 7 to preempt filing of nomination papers. Earlier, it observed a dawn-to-dusk hartal on November 1 to protest against 'unilateral announcement' of the polls schedule.

The EC declared the schedule for the three city corporation elections on October 28, fixing December 6, as the day of polling.

BNP's torch processions in city today

BNP will bring out torch processions in the city today in support of 48-hour countryside shutdown, beginning at 6 am tomorrow, reports UNB.

The processions will begin from 11 places of the city, including its central office, said a press release.

Other places are: New Market, Khilgaon, Mohakhali-Badda, Farmgate, Mohammodpur, Kafur Bus Stand, Mirpur Town Hall, Pallabi, Shayampur, Uttara and Rampura.

City BNP will hold a joint meeting at its central office at 3 pm today.

Senior World Bank official in city

By Staff Correspondent

Dr Eduardo Doryan, vice-president of Human Development Network of the World Bank, arrived in Dhaka yesterday.

During his six-day stay in the country, Dr. Doryan is scheduled to meet Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Finance Minister SAMS Kibria, Education Minister ASHK Sadique, relevant government officials, members of the civil society and academics, said a WB official last night.

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Prayer Timings

November 6		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5:10	5:40
Zohr	12:45	1:30
Asr	4:00	4:15
Maghrib	5:29	5:34
Esha	7:15	7:45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Colombo may issue letters today SAARC summit to be postponed

COLOMBO, Nov 5: Sri Lanka will postpone a seven-nation regional summit that India said should not be held due to the military takeover in Pakistan, a Foreign Ministry official said today, reports AP.

Romesh Jayasinghe said the Sri Lankan government would likely send letters tomorrow to member states of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation to inform them of the postponement.

The Sri Lankan government had said it would prefer the meeting go ahead as planned, but Jayasinghe said, 'there is no unanimity'.

On Thursday, India urged the chairperson of the meeting, Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga, to defer the Nov. 26-28 conference in Katmandu, Nepal, because of 'concern and disquiet' over the coup. The 14-year-old SAARC's charter allows any member to postpone a summit on request. Summits

were postponed in 1990 and 1992.

Jayasinghe, who heads the SAARC division in Sri Lanka's Foreign Ministry, said it was unclear when the conference would be rescheduled.

"I don't think a new date can be given," he said.

In Islamabad, the government of the new military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, accused India of interfering in the domestic affairs of another member nation, which violates the principles of the organisation.

Postponement of the summit avoids a potentially awkward meeting between India's Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and Musharraf, who ousted the civilian government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in a bloodless coup Oct. 12.

Musharraf is seen in India as the man who orchestrated the infiltration this summer of hundreds of irregulars and Pakistani army troops into

Indian-held Kashmir near the town of Kargil.

More than 1,000 combatants were killed in the 11-week mini-war.

Although Sri Lanka currently chairs the group, Nepal was to host the leaders of India, Pakistan, Bhutan, the Maldives, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

Before Jayasinghe's announcement, Nepal's Foreign Minister Ram Shrao Mahat had flown from Katmandu to

Bhutan to continue the process of delivering invitation letters.

"The date of the summit is under question, and not the summit," Mahat said.

The seven heads of government or heads of state meet annually, primarily to discuss trade issues.

But the sidelines of the summits often are venues for personal contact and provide opportunities to break the ice

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Nov 8 hartal may be withdrawn if polls cancelled: Opposition

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance could consider withdrawing the nationwide hartal on November 8 if the government immediately cancels election of three city corporations scheduled for December 6, a spokesman of its liaison committee said yesterday.

The committee at a meeting on the day discussed preparations for the 42-hour hartal due to begin at 6 am tomorrow.

The alliance called the hartal to protest cancellation of public holiday on November 7, 'the National Revolution and Solidarity Day', and on November 8 (up to 12 midnight) to thwart submission of nomination papers for the three city corporation polls.

Briefing newsmen after attending the liaison body meeting, BNP leader Anwar Zahid said although the High Court stayed the election process for a week, the alliance was still firm

on its 42-hour hartal programme. The meeting however said it could consider withdrawing the hartal on November 8 if the polls were cancelled immediately, he added.

"We called the hartal to protest unilateral announcement of polls schedule and demanding cancellation of the election. The High Court has stayed the election process for a week, but we do not know what will be the consequence of the case. Our programmes have no connection with the High Court order as the Writ has been filed on a different ground," Zahid said.

Replying to a question on possible relaxation of hartal for some hours for Kali Puja of the Hindus, he said the liaison committee didn't discuss anything about this. The committee will again sit at 7:30pm today.

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Hartal today

Feni Jubo Dal activist shot dead

From Our Correspondent

FENI, Nov 5: A Jubo Dal activist was shot dead on Taki road in the town today.

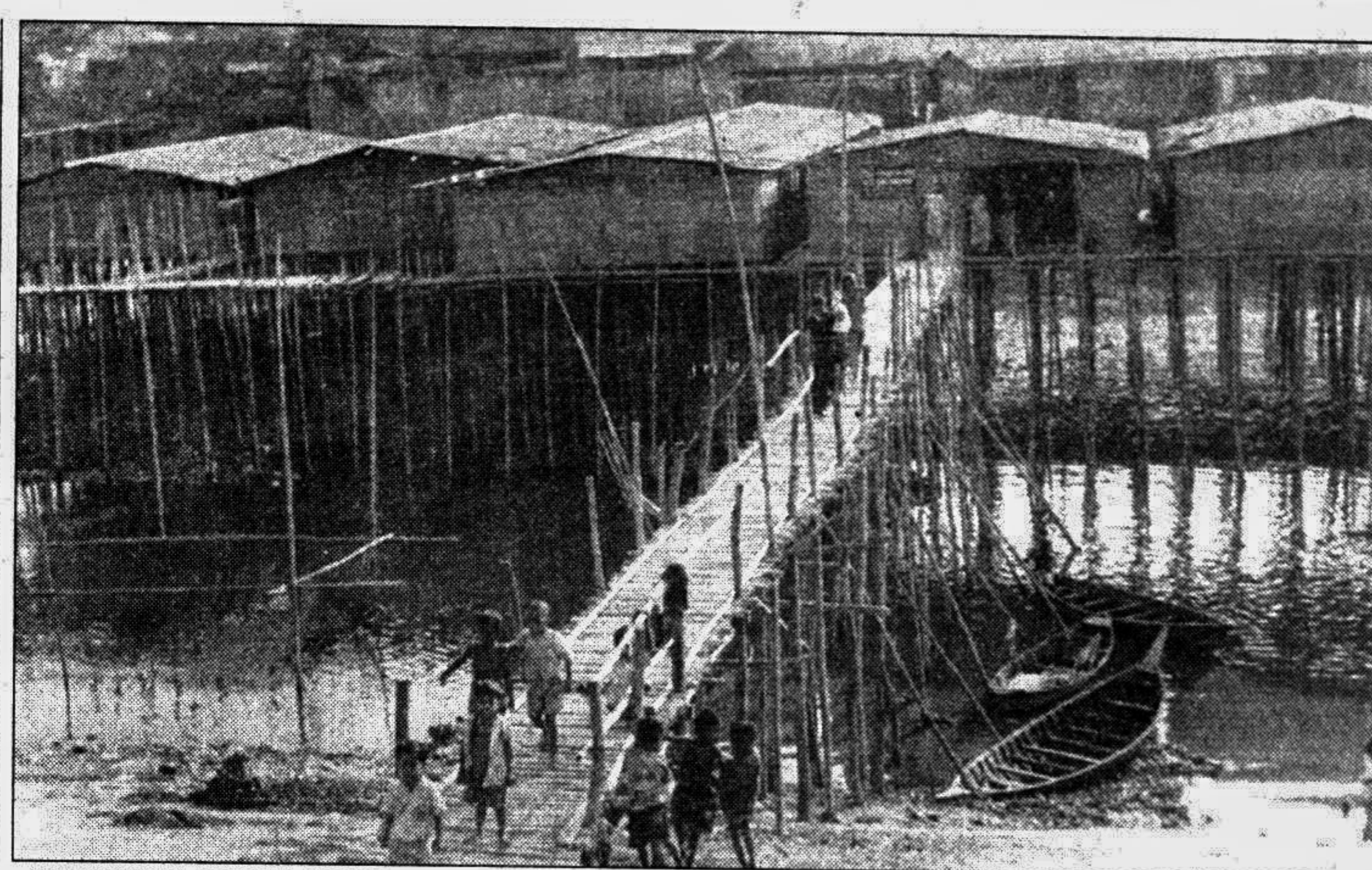
The victim was identified as Nasiruddin Swapan, 28, son of late Abdul Khaleq of village Baraipur under Feni sadar thana.

According to police and witnesses, about six unidentified assailants attacked Swapan in his shop at around 3:30 pm and shot him in his chest and abdomen. He died on the spot.

Swapan's body lay there for one and half hours. Later, police recovered the body and sent it to Feni hospital for autopsy.

District BNP president Mosharraf Hossain and secretary Joyanal Abedin, Jubo Dal president Syed Moazzem Hossain and secretary Kamrul Hossain Masud blamed the ruling party activists for the killing. They demanded immediate arrest of the killers.

District Jubo Dal and Chhatra Dal jointly called a day-long hartal in the town tomorrow protesting the murder.



BURIGANGA UNDER SIEGE: Platform houses are mushrooming on the Buriganga with encroachers trying to consolidate their grip, choking the river slowly. But none is coming forward to protect the river.

— Star photo by AKM Mohsin

Newspapers should stop printing false news' PM to accept constructive suggestions of Opposition

Striking a reconciliatory note, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has invited the opposition to settle problems across the table with assurances that any wise suggestions would be accepted, reports UNB.

"Give up the out-governed agitation... Let's resolve problems through discussion in Parliament. What's the use causing misery to people by calling unnecessary and issue-less hartal?" she said yesterday.

Speaking at a reception accorded to her by BFUL and DUJ at the National Press Club on her winning the prestigious UNESCO peace prize.

Seeking opposition's cooperation in removing poverty and resolving the problems of the common man, the prime minister said: "We want to run the country on the basis of consensus. We will gladly accept any wise suggestions from the

Opposition."

In response to the opposition plea for her government's resignation, Hasina said: "We'll do it at right time and hand over power to a caretaker government which will conduct free and fair elections."

About early general elections as demanded by the BNP-led opposition alliance, the prime minister said she wanted to give election in 2000, but the opposition had turned it down.

"After their rejection, we said that voting would be held on time. Will you again demand elections in 2000?" she asked her opponents.

"Whenever we want to give, they say no, no," she said.

Hasina said since assuming power with people's mandate, her government had been working hard to improve economic condition of the poor through various people-oriented programmes.

If people endorse our programmes, they would vote for us and if not, would choose another party," she said, adding that all powers belong to people and they would decide who are to run the country.

The function, chaired by BFUL president Abdul Kalam Azad, was also addressed by Sangbad Editor Ahmedul Kabir, Jugantar Editor Golam Sarwar, ex-BFUL president Habibur Rahman Milan and DUJ president Altaf Mahmud. BFUL secretary general Akhtar Ahmed Khan read out an address of felicitation and handed it over to the prime minister while DUJ secretary Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan conducted the function.

Cabinet ministers, editors, diplomats and senior journalists attended the function, among others.

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Rejoinder

The Press Secretary to the Prime Minister has issued a rejoinder to a news item headlined "None can stop city corp polls: PM," published in The Daily Star on November 4.

The rejoinder said the story is not a correct reflection of what the PM said.

In the speech delivered by the Prime Minister in observance of the Jail Killing Day at Pallan Maidan, there was no such mention relating to city corporation polls, it said.

The Prime Minister said, "After a long bloodstained struggle, people gained their voting rights... Today, people are conscious and no force in Bangladesh could deny them that right to vote."

Abduction: None arrested yet

By Staff Correspondent

Police are yet to arrest anybody in connection with the abduction of two school boys in the Dhaka University area on Wednesday.

The duty officer of Dhanmondi police told The Daily Star last night that two plainclothes had been engaged to nab the culprits.

The two brothers, whose names were not mentioned for security reasons, are students of class nine and ten of an English medium school at Dhanmondi. They were at their tutors' residence in the same area at around 5:10 pm and were intercepted by a gang of four while travelling by an auto-rickshaw along Road No-8. The kidnaped were then taken to the University area.

They were released on payment of ransom by their parents.

A case was lodged with Dhanmondi police station accusing Badsha, Roni, Kalam and two others.

Police said that they had hunted several places to arrest the culprits in vain till writing of this report last night.

Pope arrives in Delhi

NEW DELHI, Nov 5: Pope John Paul II arrived today to meet Asia's Roman Catholic bishops in a city where Hindu nationalists have burned him in effigy and black-clad commandos searched for explosives in a stadium where he will celebrate mass, reports AP.

Before John Paul left Rome for his second trip to India in 13 years, the Vatican called for 'collaboration' between Hindus and Christians — amid concerns over recent violence against India's Christian minority.

Hindu fundamentalists have staged marches and sit-ins to protest the Pope's visit, demanding an apology for 16th-century killings by Portuguese colonialists during the Inquisition, an end to conversions, and a declaration by the Pope that Christianity is not the only path to salvation.

A few hours before the Pope landed, the World Hindu Council issued a fresh demand. "The Pope should withdraw all

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Dhanmondi thana BNP convenor arrested

Plainclothes policemen picked up a BNP-backed Dhanmondi thana BNP City Corporation here last night, reports UNB.

Party sources said Abdul Latif, commissioner of Ward number 51 and convenor of Dhanmondi thana BNP, was arrested from the commissioner's office at about 10 pm.

Cancer Hospital

No drugs, lone cobalt machine out of order

By Naimul Haq

Cancer treatment at the only specialised government hospital in the country has virtually stopped.

Director of the National Institute of Cancer Research and Hospital (NICRH) in the city Prof Fazle Elahi said the hospital has no chemotherapy drugs for the last two years. Its only cobalt-60 tele-therapy machine is also out of order since last week.

The Central Medical Store Depot (CMSD) stopped supplying about 35 drugs — mostly injectable — which cost about Tk 50 lakh a year, about two years ago. Since then, patients requiring chemotherapy get no treatment at the hospital, sources concerned said.

More than 70 patients, new and old, come to the hospital every day. About three-fourth of them suffer from cancer of lung, ovary, cervix, stomach, liver, lymphoma, thyroid, tonsil,

urinary bladder, esophagus, skin, blood, speech organ and tongue.

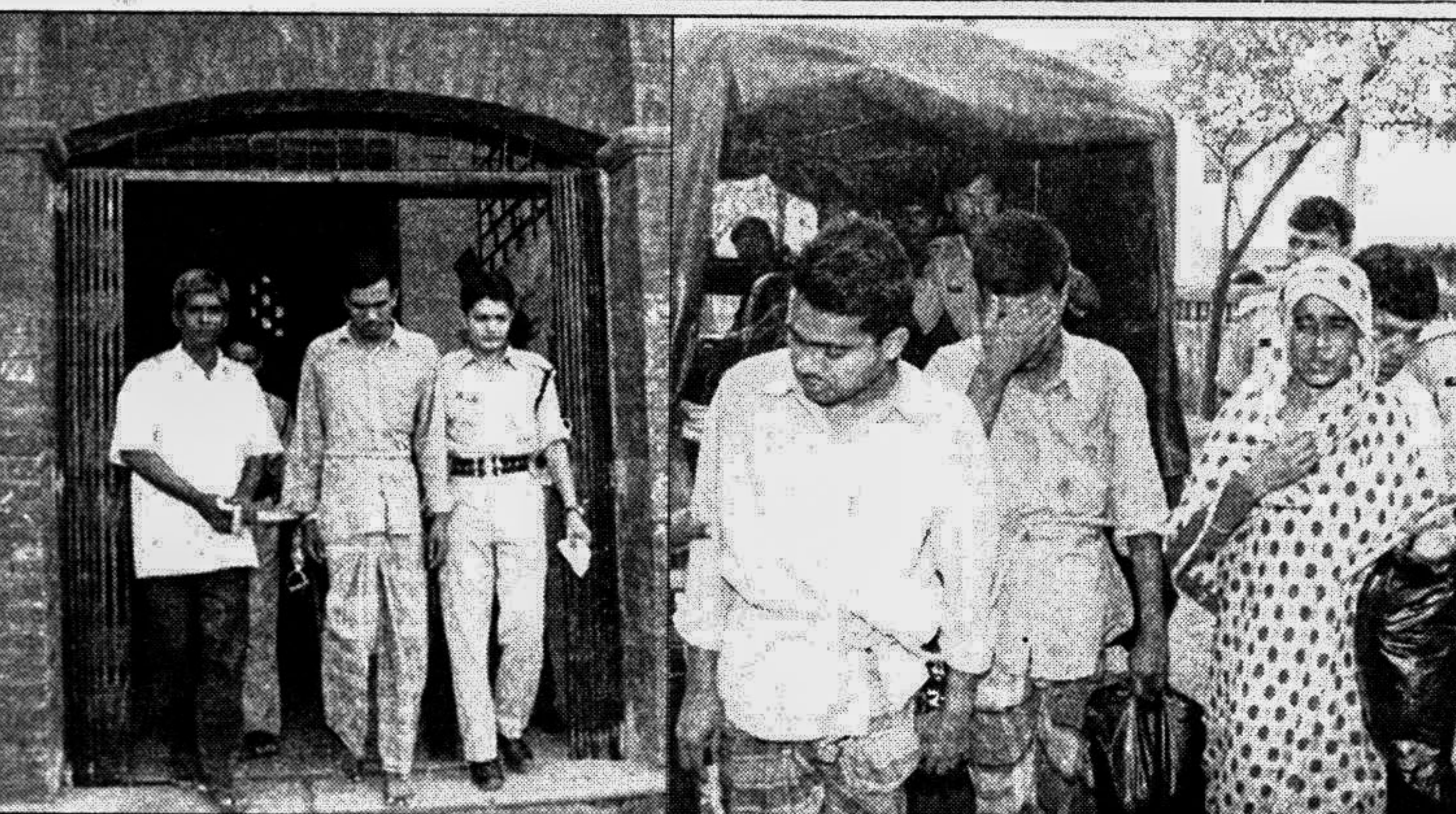
Around 80 per cent of the patients seeking treatment at indoor and outdoor departments of the hospital require chemotherapy and the rest need both tele-therapy and chemotherapy, the sources added.

According to the Cancer Society of Bangladesh, about 80 lakh people in the country suffer from some form of cancer in various degrees, not always fatal.

Some experts however said the figure could even be as high as 1.5 crore. Only a small fraction of them seek treatment at the hospital. The rest are either not aware of the disease or do not have treatment facilities nearby, they pointed out.

Prof Elahi said, "The health ministry had sanctioned over Tk two crore last financial year

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Ripon, husband of murdered Mammi, coming out of court after giving judicial statement (left) and four other accused in the murder case being taken to the court after a 3-day remand yesterday.

— Star photo

Husband describes how he murdered Mammi

From Ehsanul Haque

NARAYANGANJ, Nov 5: Mahmuda Sultana Mammi's husband Abul Kalam Azad Ripon today gave a confessional statement before a first class magistrate here saying he killed his wife six days ago.

In the nine-page statement, the principal accused in the sensational Mammi murder case described how he strangled his wife and what led him to do so at the bed room of their Beparipara house in the small hours of October 30.

Ripon gave the statement in four and half-an-hours from 9am to Magistrate A K M Sohail Choudhury who wrote it down and got approved by the accused.

A copy of the statement was made available to The Daily Star.

Extracts from the statement are as follows:

After our lunch on October 29, my mother and one of my sisters had a dispute over our house maid, Mammi who was then in the bed room thought that the dispute was over her. She took an offence. She kept aloof and did not talk to anyone till the evening.

My mother offered her snacks thrice at different times. But she refused to take. I then made several attempts. Her refusal made me very angry. She also ignored requests from me and my mother to take supper which angered me further.

At about 11:30 that night, we went to sleep. I requested her once again to take food, but she refused.

This angered me so much that I could not sleep well. I awoke her in the small hours of October 30. I made another attempt to feed her but she continued to refuse.

Extremely angered now, I slapped Mammi. At this, she became angry and caught hold of my throat, which she often used to do. I never took seriously earlier. But this time, I lost my temper.

Both of us were lying on bed. I overpowered her, sat on her and I caught her by the throat. I also forced into her mouth a shirt which I found nearby.

I pressed a scarf on her neck. Mammi was groaning. At one stage, I noticed her face turning blue, and she gradually became lifeless.

When I removed the shirt from her mouth, the tongue came out. I tried to feel her pulse, but it was not functioning. I realised that I have killed my wife.

In his statement, Ripon also

See Page 12 Col 4

Illegal manpower business: Four arrested in city

Police arrested four people allegedly involved in illegal manpower business from a residential hotel at Kakrail in the city on Thursday, said DMP a press release, reports UNB.

They also recovered Saudi currency worth about Tk 40,000, fake passports, seal and pad for making passports and identity cards from them.

The arrested were identified as Sheikh Nazrul Islam, 31, Muhammad Ismail Hossain, 31, Aiyub Hossain, 35, and Sultan Ahmed, 28.

The DMP release said DB police raided the Al-Bahr Hotel and arrested the four who allegedly opened two fake recruiting agencies — Protasha Enterprise and Shahi International.

In another raid, police seized 600 bottles of phensidyl from the city's Kamalapur area on Thursday night, the press release added.

Asian Art Biennale opens today

The century's last Asian Art Biennale Bangladesh '99, the most flamboyant art extravaganza on this part of the world, begins here today with leading artists from 36 Asia-Pacific and African countries taking part in it, reports BSS.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to inaugurate the nearly month-long 9th art festival at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium here in presence of art lovers and connoisseurs, leading cultural personalities and the elite.

State Minister for Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Quader said this at a press briefing on the exhibition in the auditorium of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy in the city yesterday.

Referring to the objective of the festival, he said it would bring together the works of the artists of different Asian and African countries for an inter-



grated display of their paintings and other art pieces.

"It will surely promote mutual understanding and cooperation as well as cultural bond among the participating countries, thus cementing closer relations among the art lovers

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