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Kidnapping: Two more held from DU hall

By DU Correspondent

Police yesterday arrested two youths from Shahidullah Hall of Dhaka University in connection with the kidnapping of two schoolboys of an English Medium School.

Police identified them as Saifur Rahman and Basir Ahmed. With this, police so far arrested four persons in connection with the recent kidnapping incident.

Neither police nor DU authorities could confirm whether the youths arrested yesterday were students or outsiders. Police, however, said both the youths claimed themselves as DU student.

Acting on a tip off, police went to the Shahidullah Hall at about 5 am and nabbed the two youths from room No 2024. The arrested were produced before the CMM's court yesterday morning, police added.

Meanwhile, two outsiders arrested from the campus on Wednesday night in connection with the kidnapping were produced before the CMM court yesterday. Police prayed for seven days' remand while the court granted remand for one day, our court correspondent said.

Durban summit

From page 1

all these issues and put the finishing touches to its report on the eve of CHOGM today," a Commonwealth statement said.

Broadened agenda

The secretary-general said there would be a review of political and economic developments in Commonwealth countries and discussions on how the civil society actors could become more active partners of governments.

"The Commonwealth is not just an association of governments but also an association of peoples," he said, explaining the emphasis on the role of the civil society in pursuing good governance and democratic principles in countries.

"It's not only having elected governments that matters... civil society can contribute to development and promotion of democracy," Chief Anyaoku said.

Ahead of the summit, a major civil society conference - the Third Commonwealth NGO Forum - discussed "The People's Future: Citizens and Governance in the New Millennium" and is submitting its report to the heads of government.

He said one of the key agenda would be the future role of the C-MAG, which has a mandate "to deal with serious and persistent violations" of the principles contained in the 1991 Harare Commonwealth Declaration.

"C-MAG will go beyond military regimes... determine which member country needs attention (in terms of human rights/democracy/freedom of media).

"It will be identifying them, naming them, and bringing collective Commonwealth pressure to bear on them," he said and added Commonwealth will provide assistance based on its report.

Established by Heads of Government at their Auckland Meeting in 1995, the C-MAG draws its mandate from the Millbrook Commonwealth Action Programme on the Harare Declaration, named after the place in New Zealand where the Heads held their Retreat in 1995.

"The Group is required to assess the nature of the infringement and make recommendations for collective Commonwealth action," a Commonwealth official said.

Debt relief

The secretary-general said rising debts remained a major problem and that "the Commonwealth would like to see more generous definition of debt entitlements to relief."

Calling for "much greater level of write-offs," he said, "Commonwealth would like to see fiscal issues taken into account in debt sustainability calculations."

Retreat

But "some of the more sensitive issues" will come up for discussions when the heads of government go on a two-day retreat starting from mid-day Saturday and ending Sunday evening in George when they will "relax with their spouses", Chief Anyaoku said.

On the opening day tomorrow, the executive session of heads of government will decide on the successor to Chief Anyaoku, who retires early April next year.

"An announcement (on the next secretary general) is expected at the close of business tomorrow," he said. Bangladesh's Farooq Sobhan and New Zealand Foreign Minister Don McKinnon are vying for the top job.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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President Shahabuddin Ahmed addressing the function celebrating Golden Jubilee of Notre Dame College in the city yesterday. — PID photo

BIMST-EC accord to form economic forum next yr

By Staff Correspondent

Representatives of Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand have agreed to form an economic forum by the middle of next year to promote trade and investment among the member states with active participation of the private sector.

The forum will assume its shape at a next ministerial meeting expected to be held sometime in April or May 2000 in New Delhi, said commerce secretary Sayed Alamgir Farouk Chowdhury at a press conference at Hotel Sheraton in the city yesterday.

Chowdhury was briefing newsmen after the two-day preparatory meeting of BIMST-EC (Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation) Economic Forum that concluded on Wednesday. The first meeting of the BIMSTEC sectoral committee on Trade and Investment was held yesterday with Bangladesh in the chair.

Joint Secretary of Indian External Affairs Ministry Dr B Balakrishnan, Myanmar charge d'affaires in Dhaka Mya Tun, additional commerce director of Sri Lanka M Sundaralingam and Bureau of Regional Trade and Economic Cooperation, Thailand director Vichai Maneeuwansin were present.

Chowdhury said the meeting on trade and investment reviewed the activities of the sub-sectors and projects under the Trade and Investment sector. A concept paper for formation of the BIMSTEC Economic Forum has been agreed at the preparatory meeting, he added.

The Economic Forum will be convened in New Delhi prior to the third ministerial meeting, Chowdhury also said.

In the sub-sector on textile and clothing, he said, the chair country Sri Lanka informed that the meeting of the expert group in this sub-sector is currently in progress. The action plan formulated at the meeting

would be circulated amongst member countries.

The commerce secretary said in the sub-sector on gems, jewellery, processed food and pharmaceutical products, chair country Thailand circulated draft action plans outlining possible projects and areas of cooperation for each of the sub-sectors.

Bangladesh, the chair country for horticulture and floricultural products, and rubber, tea and coffee sub-sectors informed that meetings in these sub-sectors would be convened soon, he added.

In the context of the sub-sector on automotive industry and parts, India mentioned that it was in the process of finalising modalities for early convening of a workshop, he said, adding it also agreed to be chair

country for the sub-sector on coconut and spices.

Myanmar mentioned that recently vast areas of land had been made available for cultivation by foreign investors, Chowdhury said, pointing that it also circulated a paper containing information on opportunities for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) for BIMST-EC countries.

He said members of the grouping decided from the very beginning to find ways and means to bring the private sector and public sector together in a forum to benefit from the synergy.

Replying to a question, Chowdhury said free trade and customs have not been discussed in the meeting.

"We did not discuss tariff reduction. The proposal should come from the private sector."

The main objective of grouping, launched in June 1997, is to foster and promote greater economic cooperation among the member countries, the secretary said referring to the first BIMST-EC meeting held in Bangkok on August 7, 1998.

The Sri Lankan team leader said there are possibilities of reciprocal tariff reduction.

"Reciprocal tariff reduction among the member countries may take place in the future with active persuasion by the private sector and governments concerned."

A total of 26 members from Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand took part in the meeting while Nepal sent an observer for the event.

Confusion crops up over polls symbol

By Nurul Kabir

Certain election symbols have created a lot of confusion among voters in Tanagil constituency of the Jatiya Sangad ahead of the by-election there.

The Deputy Commissioner of Tanagil, who is also Returning Officer for the by-election scheduled for November 15, has allocated election symbols to 32 candidates.

But voters have reasons to be confused about symbols like Stool with Bench, Pomegranate with Onion, given the size and colour of the symbols usually used in ballot paper.

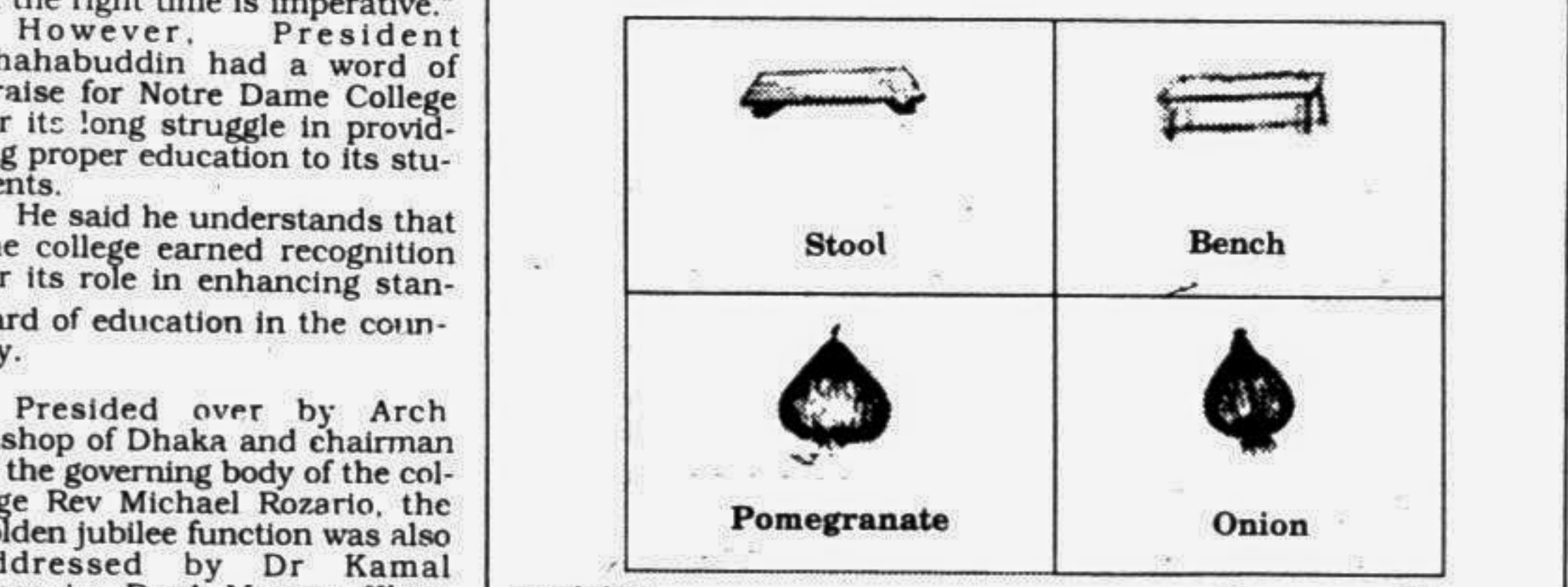
The main contenders in the by-election are Shawkat Momen Shajahan of the ruling Awami League and expelled Awami League leader Abdul Kader Siddique, Dr Uttam, who is contesting as an independent

most likely to be confused about which one is Stool and which one is Bench. Supporters of Kader Siddique allege that the RO has done it deliberately to 'damage' them politically.

The RO, however, denied the allegation. "Whatever I have done is accordance with law," he told The Daily Star over telephone.

EC officials say the legal authority to allocate symbols lies with an RO while they give certain guidelines.

"We have 140 election symbols. Of those, 119 are reserved for political parties and the rest are for independent candidates. Since the number of independent candidates is unusually high in the Tanagil by-election, we gave 15 additional symbol," said a top EC official. "While allocating election symbols, we



candidate.

Kader Siddique had earlier urged the Election Commission to include *Ganchha* (thin cotton towel) in the list of election symbols. The EC entertained the idea, but the Returning Officer (RO) eventually did not allocate *ganchha* to any one as there were more than one candidate seeking the symbol. The RO unilaterally allocated Stool to Kader Siddique.

Another candidate, Khalilur Rahman, got Bench as election symbol.

As a sample of the ballot paper to be used in the polls shows, illiterate voters are

encourage Returning Officers to be judicious, so that voters do not get confused."

In view of this, the EC recently excluded two symbols, Steamer and Fan, following allegations that voters sometimes confuse these with Boat - election symbol of Awami League.

The RO for Tanagil by-election admitted that the EC dissuaded him to allocate Water Lily as voters could confuse it with Rose - election symbol of Zaker Party. But it seems that he did not go by the spirit of the EC suggestion in allocating symbols like Stool and Bench, or Pomegranate and Onion.

Ahad murder Arrested not produced in court in 24 hrs

By Staff Correspondent

Three persons accused in the Sergeant Ahad Parvez killing case were not produced in court within 24 hours of their arrest in violation of law.

The three-Kangali Zakir and his accomplices Faruk and Sanaullah-- were arrested from Gulshan area in the city at about 8 pm on Wednesday but were not produced in court yesterday.

Asked about this, a top police official however said, "Arrested persons are always produced before court within 24 hours as required by law."

Some sources concerned pointed out that police followed the relevant law 'only in papers.'

Motijheel police said Zakir and the two others arrested on Wednesday at about 8 pm were taken to several places during the night to hunt other accused in the case. Nine people were arrested in the hunt, they said without giving details.

The gang members were brought to the police station after 2 pm on Thursday and the 24-hour detention time is to be counted from then, an official explained.

Zakir and his accomplices 'confessed their involvement in the killing of Parvez, police said.

He was killed by muggers in the city's Motijheel area in the night of October 28 while chasing them.

Allegations against Kader Siddiqui dismissed

The Electoral Inquiry Commission has dismissed nine allegations of violation of election code of conduct brought against independent candidate Kader Siddiqui in the Tangail-8 by-election, as these were not proved, reports UNB.

The commission conducted the investigation on the basis of newspaper reports and allegations brought by a few people that Kader Siddiqui distributed *ganchha* and donate money as bribes among the voters, and allured the voters.

As the Inquiry Commission found the allegations groundless, it rejected those, said an Election Commission press release yesterday.

Daily Star to honour O' & A' Level students today

By Staff Correspondent

The Daily Star today holds an award giving ceremony to honour the students who achieved outstanding results at the O' and A' Level Examinations (June '98 to June '99 Sessions) in Bangladesh.

The Programme will be held at 3 pm at the Chartered Accountants' Bhaban Auditorium (9th floor), 100 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue in the city.

Education Minister ASHK Sadeque will be present on the occasion as Chief Guest, while British High Commissioner David C Walker as Special Guest. Editor of The Daily Star, Mahfuz Anam will chair the programme.

Nearly two hundred students are expected to attend the programme.

PM in Durban

From page 1

Globalisation.

The secretary-general said that it was fitting for South Africa to host the last CHOGM of the millennium. "Given the long and deep preoccupation on the Commonwealth with the anti-apartheid cause, and South Africa's much-welcomed return to the Commonwealth in 1994."

Sharif

From page 1

B. Foley said.

"In the wake of these reported charges we would renew our call he and all the other detainees be accorded all their rights under the law and due process," Foley said.

The formal charges will be laid before magistrate following a police investigation. Treason and hijacking will be tried in Pakistan's special anti-terrorist courts, set up by Sharif.

The others also charged are: Sharif's former advisor on southern Sindh affairs, Ghaus Ali Shah, former director of Pakistan International Airlines Shahid Haqqan Abbasi, former Inspector General Sindh police Rana Maqbool, former director general of Pakistan Civil Aviation Aminuddin Chaudhry, as well as the former deputy inspectors of police from Karachi and Sukkur, in interior Sindh and a senior police official in Nawabshah, also in interior Sindh.

Shah, Abbasi and Maqbool all are currently in army custody. It wasn't immediately known the whereabouts of the other co-accused.

Mothers share beds or stay on floors

DMCH Obstetric Deptt in sorry state

By Naimul Haq

Influx of expectant mothers for caesarian surgical delivery at Dhaka Medical College Hospital is increasing every day, but the hospital is unable to cope with the situation.

Of the 24,744 patients admitted to DMCH last year, 11,206 were in Obstetric Department alone. Most of them had to share beds with two or more mothers or stay on the floors.

The Department has 90 beds only for mothers, but no baby cots for the newborn.

Operations are conducted at the hospital virtually without any emergency equipment to handle crisis, a spot visit and interviews with doctors concerned revealed.

The most important section



Two mothers sharing a single bed in Ward-15 of DMCH. There is no cot for their babies. — Star photo

A little more attention

From page 1

manage to survive in the highly polluted water of the pond.

A sewerage drain on the north-western corner keep the lake filled up. A tin-shed structure beside the drain accommodates some squatters who reside there in the guise of 'night guards'.

Hawkers who find a good space to do business on the parking lot beside the western entrance of the park use the pond as a 'rubbish bin'.

The park, developed in the eighties, had been managed by the Public Works Department (PWD). In late nineties, the Ministry of Forests and Environment (MOEF) decided to develop greenery in the park as part of its urban afforestation programme.

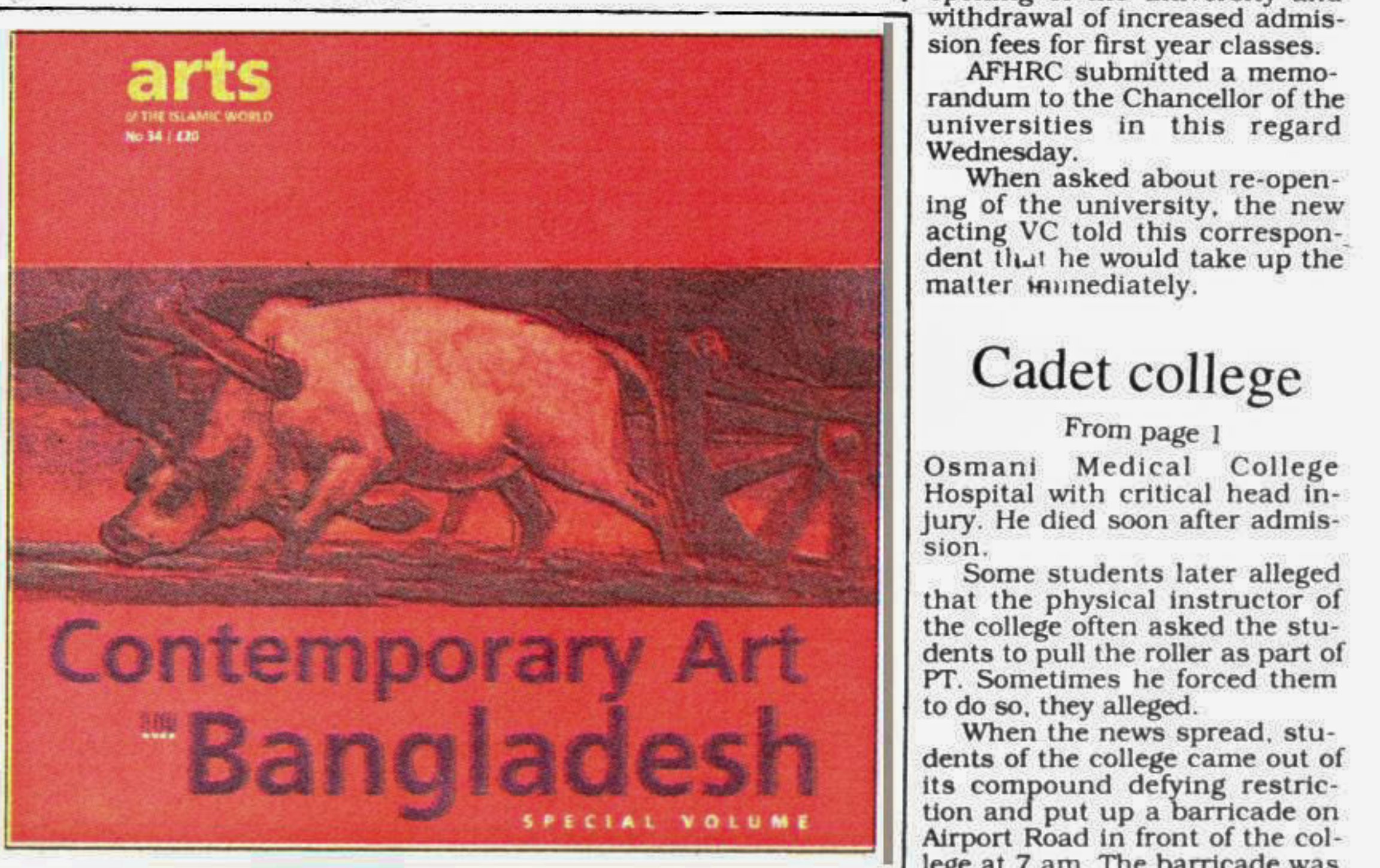
The programme was geared up in 1994-95 and 11,000 trees were planted. But recent surveys showed that only a little more than 1400 trees have survived.

But the afforestation was done in an unplanned way, giving little attention to the bio-diversity.

When the DCC was given the responsibility of the park last year, it tried to raise a 'hawkers market', allocating space to about 5,000 people.

When newspapers reported it, the DCC withdrew the plan following a directive from the Prime Minister's Office not to permit construction of markets in the city's few surviving open spaces.

Since then, the DCC left the park virtually uncared. Although DCC has a budget, there is no sign that money is being spent for its proper maintenance.



Moving into the realms of contemporary art

By Ziaul Karim

Dhaka is emerging as one of the important capitals of arts in the world map.

The London-based arts journal Arts & the Islamic World has devoted its second volume in the theme series to *Contemporary Arts in Bangladesh*. This is the first comprehensive attempt in Europe to track down the artistic achievements that began its odyssey with the establishment of Institute of Fine Arts in Dhaka back in 1948 under the bold leadership of Ziaul Karim.

The special hardcover format has shed light on issues and areas that shaped aesthetic taste and development of arts spanning 50 years.

The publication of this special edition at the threshold of the new millennium is quite significant as it suggests graduation of our arts to the world standard and recognition by the international mainstream.

A quick rundown of the subjects covered in the volume would indicate that a lot of planning has been done for critically evaluating one of the

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Prof Bayes takes charge as acting JU VC

By JU Correspondent

Acting Vice Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University (JU) Prof Abdul Bayes has taken charge of his office yesterday.

Prof Bayes was appointed acting JU VC after the post fell vacant on Tuesday following resignation of the VC. He will continue to serve as the acting VC, alongside his post of Pro-VC, until a new VC is appointed.

Meanwhile, a number of JU students expressed their frustration over the indefinite closure of the university.

JU students under the banner of 'Admission Fee Hike Resistance Committee' (AFHRC) are demanding immediate re-opening of the university and withdrawal of increased admission fees for first year classes.

AFHRC submitted a memorandum to the Chancellor of the universities in this regard Wednesday.

When asked about re-opening of the university, the new acting VC told this correspondent that he would take up the matter immediately.

Cadet college

From page 1

Osmani Medical College Hospital with critical head injury. He died soon after admission.

Some students later alleged that the physical instructor of the college often asked the students to pull the roller as part of PT. Sometimes he forced them to do so, they alleged.

When the news spread, students of the college came out of its compound defying restriction and put up a barricade on Airport Road in front of the college at 7 am. The barricade was withdrawn after three hours.

Chairman of Bangladesh Cadet College Governing Body Maj Gen Mustafizur Rahman reached Sylhet by a Biman flight and is now at the college.

A three-member committee headed by Col Faruque from the School of Infantry & Tactics, Jhalalabad Cantonment, has been formed to investigate the incident, an official source said.

Another four-member probe body headed by the vice-principal has been formed by the college authorities.

After post-mortem examination at the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College hospital, *maj-e-janaja* of the two was held on the college campus.

Later, the bodies were handed over to their families. Two UD cases were lodged with the Sylhet Kotwali thana.