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## Opposition calls another hartal on Nov 25

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance yesterday announced some fresh agitation programmes including a country-wide dawn-to-dusk hartal on November 25 to press its demand for immediate resignation of the government.

The component parties of the alliance will hold public meetings and stage demonstrations in all thana headquarters on November 20.

Opposition MPs will bring out a procession in the city on November 22 to protest an alleged attempt on the life of some BNP MPs in the city during a countrywide hartal on November 8 and the Prime Minister's "indecent and vulgar" remarks about the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament.

Announcing the programme See Page 12 Col 7

## Muggers hired hit-men to kill Dr Mosharraf

By Staff Correspondent

Snatchers hired professional hit-men to murder Dr. Mosharraf after he had made repeated demands to get back the stolen money, police revealed Tuesday.

Last May, snatchers took away Tk 16,000 from the doctor on a mini-bus near the College Gate.

Police said Mosharraf met with the snatchers and ward commissioner Ismail Hossain at Pallabi 12 several times to try and get his money back.

Mosharraf also tried to find the man he had suspected as the mastermind behind the incident, said police.

The thieves assured the doctor that they would return the money. However, Dr. Mosharraf, who was also a part-time botany teacher, was shot dead as he escorted his eight-year-old daughter to school Sunday morning at the Bat Tala on the Ring Road.

Police have arrested five people in connection with the killing and more arrests are expected in the coming days.

A police team went to Comilla to nab two suspects, See Page 12 Col 7

## It happens to politicians, Nasim tells Khoka

By Staff Correspondent

Home Minister Mohammad Nasim yesterday visited city BNP convenor Sadek Hossain Khoka MP at the BIRDEM hospital, where he is undergoing treatment after being wounded in police firing during the hartal on November 8.

The unscheduled visit by the home minister at 3:01pm surprised Khoka and newsmen present there. The minister greeted Khoka and wished him early recovery.

But there was a frosty silence for sometime when the minister entered Khoka's cabin, as the latter was waiting for physiotherapy. After sometime, the minister asked, "How are you feeling now?"

"I feel better now. But as long as I will live, I will fight against autocratic powers like yours."

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### Prayer Timings

November 17		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-10	5-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-55	4-10
Maghrib	5-23	5-28
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

## Official talks Saudi Arabia assures full support to Hasina govt

RIYADH, Nov 16: Saudi Arabia today expressed its desire to enhance economic and political relations with Bangladesh, reports UNB.

The desire was expressed to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during official talks with Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz at Yamama Palace this afternoon.

During the first-ever bilateral talks with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the Crown Prince assured that the Saudi government would continue to strengthen its relations with Bangladesh and provide 'fullest' support to Hasina's government.

Briefing newsmen about the

45-minute talks, Foreign Secretary CM Shafi Sami said the Crown Prince reiterated his government's support to Bangladesh candidate Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury for OIC Secretary General. The election is due in 2001.

Shafi Sami said the talks were held in a very cordial atmosphere with the two sides reviewing relations between the two friendly and brotherly countries.

Hasina briefed the Crown Prince about her government's various initiatives, particularly in social sector, like housing, old-age pension and poverty alleviation programme.

The Saudi Crown Prince showed keen interest in these projects and assured full moral and material support for implementation of the schemes.

The Prime Minister recalled the contribution of Saudi government to Bangladesh at times of calamity as well as financial assistance for implementing projects like cyclone centres.

The Crown Prince assured his government's assistance in building adequate cyclone centres in Bangladesh, if needed.

About manpower import from Bangladesh, he assured the prime minister of exploring the possibility of recruiting more workers.

See Page 12 Col 8

## AL candidate unofficially declared elected

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday declared Awami League candidate Shahkhat Momen Shahjahan unofficially elected in the Tangail by-elections held on Monday, reports BSS.

Shahjahan won the by-polls defeating his rival independent candidate Abdul Kader Siddique with a margin of 15,827 votes. Shahjahan bagged 75,975 votes while Kader Siddique got 60,148 votes.

The EC officials said polling in four centres out of the total 82 were postponed due to violence and allegations of irregularities. But the Awami League candidate was unofficially declared elected, as the total 13,452 votes of the centres would not affect the result after re-polling.

## Cancel poll results, demand Siddique, 19 other candidates

From Reaz Ahmad and Mizan Ali

TANGAIL, Nov. 16: Abdul Kader Siddique and 19 other independent candidates who contested yesterday's by-polls in Tangail-8 parliamentary constituency today demanded immediate cancellation of the election result, alleging rigging.

But ruling Awami League candidate Shahkhat Momen Shahjahan, who was unofficially declared elected by the Election Commission today, said he will go for legal measures if the election result is cancelled.

Shahjahan charged Siddique with creating panic during the voting hours that kept his voters away from the polling centres.

On the other hand, Siddique brought allegations against the

government that there was rigging in the polls.

The 19 independent candidates demanded cancellation of the poll results at a joint press conference at Tangail Press Club. They brought allegations of 'freestyle rigging' by the ruling party men. They did not allow presence of polling agents of other candidates in 62 out of total 82 voting centres, the candidates alleged.

Some local people said they are fearing flare-up of further violence in Sakhipur-Basail area.

Both Shahjahan and Siddique declared here today that they would hold separate press conferences at the Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka tomorrow afternoon.

The district administration imposed Section 144 at Sakhipur thana headquarters from dawn to dusk today as Siddique planned to hold a public meeting and Shahjahan's supporters planned to bring out a 'victory procession' from the same venue.

Siddique shifted his meeting venue to Kachua, about 5km from the thana headquarters.

Mollah Waheduzzaman, DC of Tangail who was the Returning Officer for the by-polls, told The Daily Star that Section 144 was imposed fearing confrontation between supporters of the Siddique and Shahjahan.

However their supporters brought out separate processions in Basail, one in the

See Page 12 Col 3



Police intercepted a joint procession of BNP, Jatiya party and Jamaat-e-Islami at Bijoy Nagar as it was proceeding towards Purana Paltan area in the city during yesterday's hartal.

—Star Photo by Anisur Rahman

## Hartal by & large peaceful

By Staff Correspondent

The dawn-to-dusk hartal yesterday called by the BNP-led opposition alliance passed off by and large peacefully but paralysed normal life and economic activities across the country.

No major incident was reported, apart from sporadic clashes, injury and bomb explosions in different parts in the capital and elsewhere in the country.

In the capital, more than a dozen people were injured while police arrested 28 people on charges of damaging vehicles, exploding bombs and pelting stones at police.

The usual troubled spots - Jatrabari, Nayapaltan and Bijoy Nagar in the city - were relatively calm and no major incident of violence was reported. But there were sporadic explosion at these areas.

Both the pro- and anti-hartal activists brought out a series of processions in the capital.

During the hartal hours, armed terrorists fired several rounds at a BNP procession at Amtali in Shahjahanpur at

about 12:45pm, leaving four wounded.

BNP joint secretary general and Juba Dal president Mirza Abbas was leading the procession. The injured were identified as Abul, Nazrul, Sohel and Iqbal and were admitted to private clinics. Police claimed that processionists at Amtali exploded bombs and created a reign of terror.

Pickets damaged five vehicles near Golapbagh playground area at about 10:20am. Witnesses said activists of pro-BNP Jatiya Parishad from a procession took part in the rampage. Police rushed to the spot and chased the processionists and rescued the vehicles from further damage.

Four powerful bombs exploded when a BNP procession was passing through the Nightingale crossing at 4pm. Police reacted promptly and fired three rounds of tear shells, creating a tension in the area.

Another bomb exploded near the BNP central office when the party was holding a rally there See Page 11 Col 7

## Siddique complains to EC

By Staff Correspondent

Abdul Kader Siddique, Bir Uttam, yesterday urged the Election Commission to cancel the controversial by-elections held on Monday in Tangail-8 constituency of the Jatiya Sangsad.

In a four-page complaint faxed to the EC secretariat, Kader Siddique who contested the polls as an independent candidate, said that the entire election was rigged by the ruling party hoodlums, while the EC did not take responsibilities of the government-sponsored terrorist activities that took place in the constituency during election hours.

Siddique said that some 60 per cent of the voters were not allowed to exercise their right to franchise, while the ruling party activists indulged in rigging of votes in all the 82 polling centres of the constituency. They obstructed voters to enter polling stations and illegally put seals on ballot papers in and outside polling booths at every centre. Siddique told The Daily Star after sending the statement to the EC yesterday evening.

## Vajpayee fears for Sharif's life

NEW DELHI, Nov 16: Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee warned today that his deposed Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif might be executed by the country's military rulers, reports AFP.

"If there is no timely international intervention, then Sharif might end up the way Zulfikar Ali Bhutto did," Vajpayee was quoted as saying by the Press Trust of India (PTI) as he spoke to reporters on his plane returning from The Commonwealth heads of state summit in Durban.

Bhutto, the father of former premier Benazir Bhutto, was overthrown as prime minister in a 1977 military coup by General Mohammad Zia ul-Haq and hanged nearly two years later on a political murder conspiracy charge.

Sharif has been detained at a secret location ever since his elected government was ousted October 12 in a bloodless coup by army chief General Pervez Musharraf.

Sharif has been accused of conspiring to kill Musharraf. The Commonwealth summit suspended Pakistan's membership indefinitely, but Vajpayee said failure to return to civilian rule would result in harsher punishment.

"If democracy is not restored soon, Pakistan can even be expelled from the Commonwealth," he said, while raising an eyebrow at the low-key US response to Musharraf's coup.

"Maybe they (US) have some other consideration... maybe the consideration of democracy is not uppermost for them," Vajpayee said.

While publicly denouncing the overthrow of Sharif's government, Washington has made

it clear that it is willing to give the new regime in Islamabad time to fulfil promises to put the economy back on track and root out corruption.

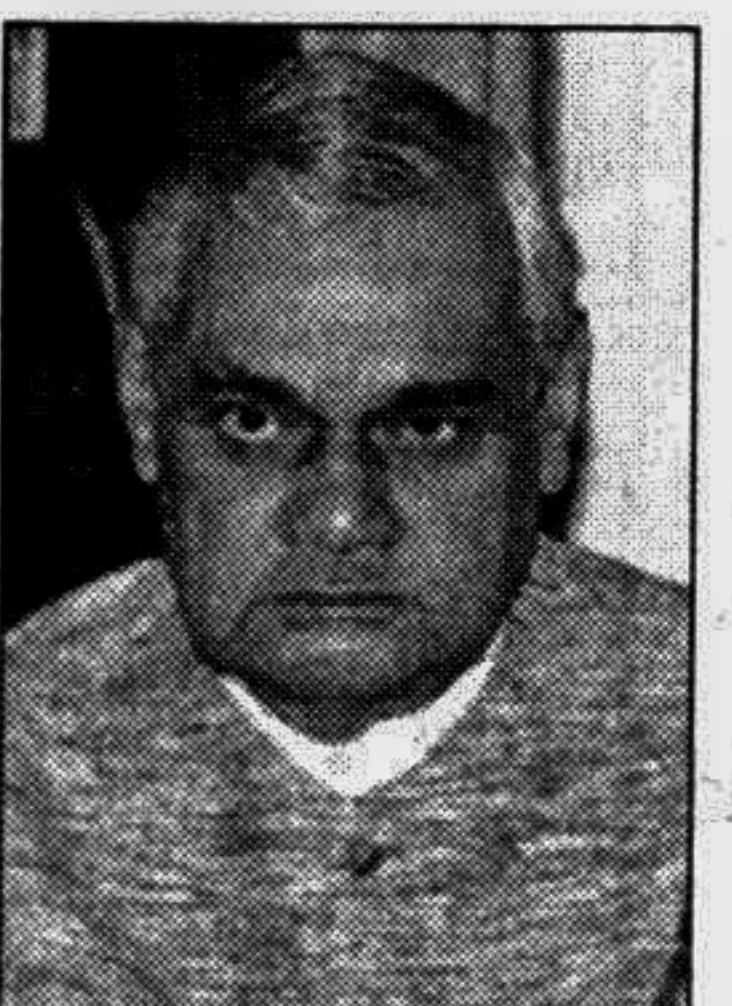
According to Vajpayee, some developed nations at the Durban summit had wanted to take a softer stance against Pakistan, but were outnumbered by countries from Asia, Africa and the Caribbean.

"On the question of restoration of democracy in Pakistan the Commonwealth's view has become more emphatic with our intervention at the summit. It will not be compromised at all," said Vajpayee.

The Indian position at the summit was that early elections should be held in Pakistan and all political prisoners, including Sharif, should be released. Report from Islamabad says: Former Pakistani premier Nawaz Sharif, deposed in a coup last month, faces a string of charges including treason and conspiracy to murder, according to a copy of the accusations received today, reports AFP.

Sharif has been in military detention since he was ousted by Army Chief General Pervez Musharraf on October 12.

Police say he will soon be arrested and brought before an See Page 11 Col 8



Vajpayee

## Anniversary of Bhasani's death today

By Staff Correspondent

The 23rd anniversary of death of Moulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani will be observed in the country today with due respect.

Different socio-political and cultural organisations have drawn up elaborate programmes to observe the death anniversary.

President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and leader of the opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia, in separate messages on the occasion paid rich tributes to Moulana Bhasani.

The day's programmes include holding of discussion meetings, *milad mahfils* and laying of floral wreaths at the grave of the Moulana.

Opposition BNP has chalked out programmes to observe the day. Party leaders will place wreaths at the mazar of the great leader and hold a discussion meeting in the afternoon.

To mark the day, Bangladesh Workers Party will place wreaths at the grave of Moulana Bhasani and hold a discussion at its office in the afternoon.

On November 11 night, Sobhan was all smiles, confident that he was going to win a strong propaganda that he was going to withdraw. The next day, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, his prime promoter, said the Bangladesh candidate was going to win.

"Thanks to India, we're going to win," she told this correspondent at the Durban International Conference Centre where the vote was to take place hours later.

"India will support us," she said at the luncheon where media men met the heads informally.

Indeed, much depended on India. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee told Hasina on November 12 that he was going to vote for her candidate. The support elated the Sobhan camp, but it came too late.

The fact that India remained undecided till the last minute was a major factor in the whole scheme of things.

"India kills Bangla C'wealth post bid" was the title of an Asian Age story on November 12 morning, the voting day. The story quoted an Indian external affairs ministry official as saying: "We have not made up our mind as yet."

And the story went on to say See Page 11 Col 7

## Farooq Sobhan's defeat What went wrong?

By Toufique Imrose Khalidi in Durban, South Africa

Nobody — other than the host President Thabo Mbeki and Secretary-General Chief Emeke Anyaoku — will ever know how close it was. But it was "very close," claim highly-placed sources.

Even if it is one vote, the Commonwealth tradition dictates that the losing candidate gives way to make it a unanimous decision.

Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammed of Malaysia led the campaign for Farooq Sobhan of Bangladesh against his successful opponent Don McKinnon, currently the foreign and trade minister of New Zealand. But the Malaysian leader, due to preoccupation at home, was not here. "Things would have been different if he had been in Durban," says a top Bangladesh official.

There were very many other factors in this complicated game of international politics. The members of the Old Commonwealth may have wanted someone from among them to head the 54-nation organisation, but it was a numbers game. The new, small and the poor were a vast majority. Sobhan's strength lay in that. But the results went the other way.

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## 'Tangail by-poll was exercise of muscle-power'

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Human Rights Commission (BHRC) has observed that results of Monday's Tangail-8 by-election did not reflect the opinion of voters and urged the Election Commission to withhold formal announcement of the results, reports UNB.

Summing up reports of its 109th session yesterday, BHRC in a press release yesterday said, "It was an exercise of muscle-power rather than free, fair and impartial voting."

It said many voters could not cast their votes due to violence, intimidation, and police firing. Not more than 25 per cent of voters could cast their votes.

Results of such polls infringed by muscle-power would be a serious threat to democracy and violation of human rights, said BHRC.

It suggested cancellation of election in centres where allegations of vote rigging were lodged.

## Rickshaw-puller beaten to death

By Staff Correspondent

A young rickshaw-puller was beaten to death allegedly by a businessman and his companions at Dhonia under the Demra thana yesterday morning.

The dead was identified as Sattar, 27, son of Afir Uddin, hailing from Golampur in Sherpur district.

Quoting witnesses, hospital sources said Humayun Ahmed, Abu Salam and Abu Siddique dragged Sattar out of his Dhonia residence, took him to a house near Dholakhal and seriously beat him up with an iron rod at around 8:30 am. When Sattar lost consciousness they left him out on the street at Dholakhal.

Later, local people first sent him to his residence and, as his condition deteriorated, took him to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the attending doctor declared him dead at around 11:45 am.

A few days, according to local people, a rickshaw-puller was hired by one businessman to take a sack of brass ware to another shop in the area. But he never reported to that shop. The angry businessman, taking Sattar for the culprit, went to his house with two others. The three beat the hapless rickshaw-puller severely which eventually caused his death.

A case was lodged with the Demra police station. Police arrested Abu Siddiq and Humayun Ahmed for their alleged involvement in the killing of Sattar.

## Row over fishing: Two shot dead in Sunamganj

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Nov 16: Two persons were shot dead today centring a row over fishing in a remote village under Tahipur thana in Sunamganj district.

According to villagers of Bardal Natunhati, several fishermen were fishing in a small ditch at the village at about 10 in the morning when a group of armed men led by one Fazlul Haque, who claimed to be lessee of nearby Matian beel (water body), arrived there and asked them to stop fishing. Haque said they were fishing without his permission. But the fishermen said the ditch was outside the leased area.

More villagers reached the spot and protested Haque's claim. At one stage, Haque fired on the villagers killing Abdul Rashid, 45, one of the villagers, and Abdul Karim, 25, one of his accomplices.

Haque immediately went to the police station and filed a case accusing the villagers of killing his accomplice Abdul Karim. But villagers alleged that he intentionally fired at

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## Strike declared illegal Army deployed at Mongla Port

From Quazi Amanullah

KHULNA, Nov 16: Army has been deployed at Mongla Port to help loading and unloading activities as a strike by casual staff has crippled the port. An army convoy took control of the port at about 11pm yesterday.

The 'gang' booking will begin from this evening under the supervision of the army and Mongla Port Authority, said a source at Mongla Port Authority.

All stevedores and shipping agents have rushed to port to do the needful concerning loading and unloading operations.

Meanwhile, the strike that was enforced by over 1100 casual staff from November 9 has been declared illegal by the concerned ministry and the chairman of Mongla Port Authority has already received a letter in this regard. Sources said the need for army deployment was

strongly felt after the strike the declaration.

Out of the 28 ships waiting at the outer anchorage of the port, seven are loaded with imported food grains. Two ships carrying World Food Programme consignment of wheat have been waiting since November 8 to be unloaded. The WFP in faxed messages has asked captains of the two ships to leave the port without waiting any more for unloading. Besides, two more ships loaded with wheat went back to Chittagang Port from Heron Point.

Meanwhile, the striking shipping employees seemed adamant over their 15-point demands. The stevedores are also determined not to agree to the demands as those go against the greater interest of

See Page 11 Col 7