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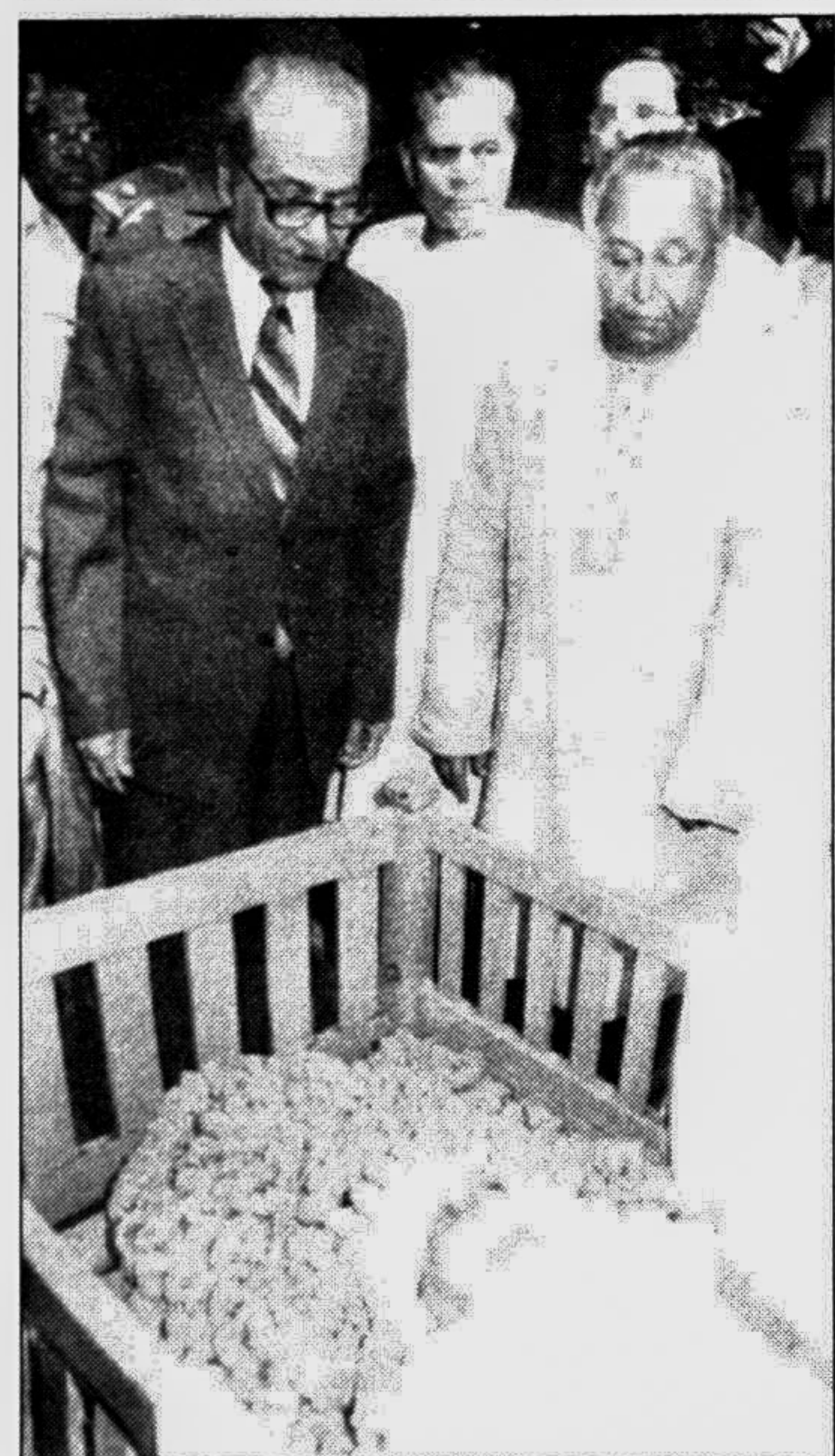

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President pays last respect

— Star photo

Begum Sufia Kamal

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family sources said.

Being inspired by the ideology of Begum Rokeya, Sufia Kamal led the Muslim women to the path of progress for three decades," the President said in the message. "He was a poet who earned blessings of Rabindranath Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam and Saugat Editor Mohammad Nasiruddin."

Recalling her role in anti-autocracy movements, the President said she held women rallies and led processions during the mass upsurge in 1969.

She had been the president of Mahila Parishad since 1970 and was associated with so many socio-cultural and literary organisations, he said.

"It is needless to say that the death of Sufia Kamal has created an irreparable loss to the movement for welfare of women," Shahabuddin said.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in her message said the nation lost a courageous matriarch who fought lifelong for establishing truth, justice and democracy.

Deeply shocked at the death

of the poet, Hasina said Begum Sufia Kamal, pioneer of women renaissance, was a personality who was dauntless, incorruptible and respected by all.

"She was the beacon of the great Language Movement and Liberation War and inspiration in all democratic movements of the nation."

Sufia Kamal strongly condemned the killing of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and was always vocal for the trial of the killers, Hasina said.

She was a social reformer and was against all forms of fanaticism, fundamentalism and autocracy, the Prime Minister said.

Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia also expressed her deep shock at the death of the poet.

In her message, she said literary works of Begum Sufia Kamal have glorified the Bangla literature.

The former prime minister also expressed her sympathy with the members of the bereaved family and prayed for salvation of the departed soul.

Restaurant, house ransacked by alleged AL activists in city

By Staff Correspondent

A group of people posing themselves as ruling party activists allegedly ransacked a restaurant and the residence of its owner twice on Friday at Bangladesh old part of the city that resulted in injury of three aged women, relatives of the victims said.

The affected family members alleged that Kotwali police refused to register a case in this regard. Rather they asked them (members of the family) to file a general diary. Kotwali police, however, denied the allegation last night.

According to family members of late Chan Mia, the gang led by one Bashir Ahmed attacked their restaurant and residence at about 2 pm. Bashir Ahmed earlier lost two cases in the court of law regarding the possession of the restaurant.

The attackers damaged the restaurant and assaulted a number of its employees.

The goons also attacked the residence and looted valuables. When the women of a house tried to resist them, the attackers assaulted 60-year-old, blind wife of Chan Mia, his daughter Manjura Begum and his daughter-in-law Nurjahan, family members alleged.

The goons, including Kalu — said to be the general secretary of Awami League ward no 71, again attacked the residence of late Chan Mia in the evening and threatened the family members with dire consequence.

None, however, was arrested in this connection till last night.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

Published by the Editor from City Publishing House Ltd., 90 Kakrail, Dhaka-1000 on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motiheel C.A., Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No. 11, Road No. 3, Dhanmandi R/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 8616772-4. Commercial: 8616771, Fax No: 88-02-8613035, GPO Box No: 3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA. Internet edition address: http://www.dailystarnews.com and Email address: dstar@bangla.net

Opposition stages demonstrations in city, thana headquarters

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance yesterday staged demonstrations in all thana headquarters across the country to press its demand for resignation of the government and early parliamentary polls.

As part of the programme, the BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote organised separate rallies and brought out processions in support of their demands.

Some other smaller parties Jajga, Democratic League, PNP and NDA — also organised rallies and brought out processions.

In capital Dhaka, main opposition BNP staged rallies and demonstrations in Ramna, Kotwali, Lalbagh, Kamrangir Char, Hazaribagh, Tejgaon, Mirpur, Pallabi, Gulshan, Cantonment, Badda, Sabujbag, Motiheel, Demra, Sutrapur, Khilgaon and Shyampur thanas.

Central and thana unit leaders addressed those rallies and led processions that paraded different city streets and lanes with anti-government slogans.

Pakistan

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said the ousted premier was confident and his physical condition was improving.

"Today, he has gone through the newspapers and now is aware of the international events and the happenings in the country."

Sharif has not yet been formally charged.

On Friday he insisted he was innocent as he appeared at the anti-terrorism court. "I did not conspire in a hijacking," Sharif told the Karachi court during the 20-minute hearing on Friday.

Two AL men shot dead in Feni

From Our Correspondent

FENI, Nov 20: Two activists of the iron organisations of ruling Awami League were shot dead and three others injured in two separate incidents here last night.

The dead were identified as Mohammad Faruq, 25, a BCL activist and Abu Ahmed alias Abu 32, a Sramik League activist.

According to police and witnesses, a group of unidentified assailants called BCL activist Faruq and Azad out of a tea shop at village Madhupur in Sadar thana at around 8:30 pm and shot them point blank.

Local people rushed them to Feni Sadar Hospital where Faruq died after midnight.

The injured BCL activist Azad was shifted to Pangu Hospital in Dhaka as his condition deteriorated.

After the incident, gunshots and bomb blasts rocked Mohammadpur and nearby villages.

In another incident, a group of unidentified gunmen attacked the house of Sramik League activist Abu Ahmed alias Abu at village Alarpur under Daganbhuiyan thana at about 9:30 pm.

They opened fire on Abu, his father Tazul Islam and brother-in-law Saiful.

Abu died on the spot while his father and brother-in-law were admitted to Feni Sadar Hospital with bullet injuries.

Police could not find out the reasons behind the killings till filing of this report at 6 pm today.

Abu's body was sent to Feni hospital for autopsy.

District BCL President and General Secretary blamed BNP activists for the killings, but BNP denied the allegation.

Professor Joyra Abedin, General Secretary of Feni district BNP said the killings were sequel to internal conflict of the ruling party.

Political violence in city leaves 50 hurt

By Staff Correspondent

Fifty people including the officer-in-charge of Ramna thana were injured following clashes between police and activists of opposition political parties in the city yesterday.

Clashes between police and BNP activists were reported from Mohammadpur and Tejgaon areas. Chase and counter-chase between police and Islami Shashantantra Andolon were reported from Muktagang area.

Rafikul Islam, OC of Ramna Police reportedly lost his walkie-talkie during the clash that began at about 5:30 pm and lasted for about half an hour.

Police and witnesses said, the traffic in the area was interrupted during the period, witnesses said.

Police said unruly elements ransacked some vehicles passing through the area during that time. They swung into action to restore normalcy. None, however, was arrested.

At one stage during the chase and counter-chase police baton charged the activists, lobbed tear gas shells and used rubber bullets. Walkie-talkie of the OC got lost during the chase and counter chase, police said adding that it remained missing till the writing of this report last night. The activists also damaged some way-side stalls of vendors.

Abdul Latif Chowdhury, joint secretary of Islami Shashantantra Andolon told The Daily Star that they held a rally at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram yesterday afternoon, amidst resistance from police.

Later they brought out a procession from the North Gate which was led by their leader

Moulana Syed Mohammad Fazlul Karim, Pir of Charnomai, he said. Marching up to the press club, the processionists moved towards the zero point through Bijoynagar. Police swooped down on the processionists when they reached Muktagang, firing tear gas shells and rubber bullets, he added.

A BNP press release said police swooped down on a party procession after it was brought out from Mohammadpur town hall and three persons were picked up. Police denied the arrest. But police sources acknowledged that in certain areas of the city processionists were asked to divert their processions like the one which tried to go towards Farm gate on VIP road from Tejgaon.

BNP MPs to bring out procession in city tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

BNP legislators will bring out a procession tomorrow from its Naya Palton office in the city to mobilise public support for its oust-government movement, said a press release.

Leader of the Opposition in parliament and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will lead the procession.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan called upon the party MPs to be present at the BNP office by 10:00 am to make the programme a success.

Will Khaleda be there today?

By Staff Correspondent

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia did not decide until 10:30 last night whether she would attend the Armed Forces Day function today (Sunday) at the Senakunja.

A close aide of the BNP Chairperson told The Daily Star over telephone that chances of her attending the programme were 'slim'.

Some top leaders found the BNP Chairperson 'not interested' to attend the function because most of the high ranking BNP leaders, like M Saifur Rahman, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, had not been invited.

Another reason for her not attending the function was the casual manner in which the present army authorities delivered the invitation card. A messenger reportedly left the invitation card at the reception, outside her Cantonment residence. On previous occasions, an officer from the Armed Forces Division carried the invitation letter, the aide pointed out.

Unlike in the previous years, this time Khaleda Zia did not receive any invitation card as the widow of a freedom fighter, Lt Gen Ziaur Rahman, BU.

She had received two cards for the past several years — one as the widow of Ziaur Rahman and the other as the Leader of the Opposition in the past four years, the aide said.

Despite repeated attempts, army authorities could not be reached for comments.

Another source said that the Leader of the Opposition had not yet finalised her daily schedule for today till the time of writing this report.

Quit before more rigged polls: Khaleda

By Staff Correspondent

Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has demanded of the government to step down immediately before holding any more 'rigged' polls.

In a statement yesterday, she said that the recent parliamentary by-election in Tangail was a manifestation of the government's continued practice of rigging.

The former prime minister castigated the government for 'stealing votes' in all elections held after the June 12, 1996 general election and termed the latest one in Tangail 'a naked show of rigging'.

She alleged that the results of the Tangail election were pre-set and the government forcibly defeated 'rebel' Awami League leader Abdul Kader Siddique.

Khaleda said the government has found rigging as the last resort to cling to power and the Chief Election Commissioner has been assisting it in 'stealing votes' in the polls.



Fraudulent practices have found their way into the very basic foundations that help to build human virtues. But it is heartening to see that a group of conscious citizens have finally come together to try to fight this menace. Shikhar Maan Sangrakshak O Nal Protirodh Andolon brought out a procession and paraded the city streets yesterday to voice their stand.

— Star photo

Lahore blast kills six

LAHORE, Nov 20: Six people were killed and 17 injured when a powerful bomb exploded here today, police said, reports AFP.

The bomb, believed to be a timed device, had been planted on a bicycle parked outside a cycle dealer's shop in a crowded commercial area, they said.

"It was a deafening explosion," said Qasim Ali, owner of a grocery store in the Sootar Mandi market where the blast occurred. "There was great panic all around the place."

Police and bomb disposal squads were at the scene as ambulances rushed victims to hospital.

Most of the injured were boys who were playing at a video game center opposite to the bomb-hit shop across the road, police said, adding several of them were critically wounded.

No one immediately claimed responsibility and police said they had no immediate clues.

Earlier this month three explosions occurred in the town of Muridke, near Lahore, close to a public meeting of a guerrilla group Lashkar-i-Taiba, involved in an armed separatist drive in Indian-controlled Kashmir.

The group and police had blamed the blasts, in which two people were killed and 17 injured, on agents of the intelligence of neighbouring India.

Lahore is capital of Punjab, Pakistan's political heartland and home province of ousted prime minister Nawaz Sharif, who was overthrown by the military in a coup on October 12.

On November 11 at least nine people were injured in a bomb explosion in a bus in the city of Hyderabad in southern India.

The next day a series of rockets attacked targeting United States and United Nations buildings rocked the capital, Islamabad, ahead of UN sanctions imposed against Afghanistan on November 14.

B'baria polytech student, trader murdered in city

By Staff Correspondent

A student of Brahmanbaria Polytechnic Institute was stabbed to death at Tejgaon and a stone trader was shot dead at Jurain in the city yesterday.

Police and hospital sources identified the dead as Zahir Alam Sumon, 20, the student, and Mukhlesur Rahman, the trader.

The motive behind the murders could not be known immediately. Police, could not arrest any one in connection with the killings till filing of this report last night.

Suman's parents live in Dhaka. A young man called

Sumon, son of Jahangir Alam, out of their CSD Godown Staff Quarter residence at about 8 pm on Friday. Since then he did not return home. His body with stab marks was recovered by police from a house at Tekunipara and sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Suman's father identified the body at the morgue.

Mukhlesur Rahman was called out of his West Jurain residence at about 12 am Saturday by two persons — Sharif and Babu, Shyampur police said.

One person — Habibur Rahman — informed the victim's family that Mukhles was shot in an abandoned house at Tularbachiha.

Habibur Rahman, his brother, took him to DMCH where doctors declared him dead at about 3 am yesterday.

Shyampur police said that Mukhles himself was a hoodlum, wanted in a number of cases.

The murder cases were filed with Tejgaon and Shyampur thanas in connection with the killings.

Eight Ctg customs face corruption charges

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Nov 20: Departmental proceedings have been started against eight customs officials of Chittagong Customs House following detection of their alleged involvement in over 30 cases of tax evasion by traders, sources concerned said.

Tax evasion of about Tk 20 crore was detected in those cases in the past two months.

False declaration was given about imported goods and fake documents were filed for evading tax.

More customs officials are likely to face punitive action as investigation is on in 20 other cases of tax evasion, the sources added.

A special customs squad formed by the National Board of Revenue is conducting investigation.

Cases of tax evasion were detected during investigation into import of chemicals, motor parts, machinery, accessories and fabrics. Forged L/Cs, invoices and bill of lading were detected by the squad in those cases.

Steps are being taken to realise the evaded customs duties. Customs House sources said.

Motor parts were imported with false declaration that those were spares of tractors used in farming, which are duty free.

Three containers carrying velvet clothes worth several crores of taka were detained last week by army personnel posted at Chittagong port jetty gate at the time of delivery with false declaration that those are

polyster clothes, port and customs sources said.

They believe that the costly clothes were imported by a garments factory owner to sell those in the market by evading huge amount of duty.

Commissioner of Chittagong customs house Abul Kasem told this correspondent that punitive action would be taken against the officials involved in this.

A section of traders is dumping foreign clothes in the local market by importing those under back to back L/C against garments factories and later getting those recorded as exported in connivance with customs officials concerned.

A number of C&F agents are also allegedly linked with such rackets.

Police begin probing Shikdar's aide

Staff Correspondent

commissioners, police said. "I was asked by Ershad Shikdar several times to introduce my wife Shikha to him and take her to Swarnakamol (Ershad Shikdar's residence). But I did not do that because he is a debauch," Mahmud told to police.

Mahmud will be taken on remand for further interrogation. If necessary, he will be brought face to face with Ershad Shikdar to verify the statements.

Police further said that Mahmud had helped Ershad Shikdar in killing Jubo League leader Khalid Hossain on May 16.

Meanwhile, all preparations are being made to begin Ershad Shikdar's trial this month in the special court which is likely to be housed in the Judge Court building.

Shikdar is likely to be produced in court tomorrow for charge-framing in the Panna murder case.

Mahmud had filed a case accusing 21 police personnel including former OC of Khulna thana Abul Khair for looting property worth Tk 21 lakh from the ice factory in July last. But that operation, in which some valuables were seized, was led by some top officials of KMP including three deputy police

commissioners, police said. "I was asked by Ershad Shikdar several times to introduce my wife Shikha to him and take her to Swarnakamol (Ershad Shikdar's residence). But I did not do that because he is a debauch," Mahmud told to police.

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Armed Forces Day

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War of Liberation. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, also the Defence Minister, will also lay wreaths at Shikhar Anirban.

Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen M Mustafizur Rahman, Naval Chief Rear Admiral A Taher and Air Chief Air Vice-Marshal Jamal Uddin Ahmed will lay wreaths at the Shikha Anirban separately.

Chiefs of the three services will pay courtesy call on the President at Bangabhaban. They will also pay similar call on the Prime Minister at the PM's Office at Armed Forces Division in the Dhaka Cantonment.

A reception to gallantry award winning freedom fighters and members of the shahed families will be held at Prime Minister's Office at Dhaka Cantonment.

The Prime Minister will meet the family members of seven Bir Shresthos — Shaheed Captain Mohiuddin Zahangir, Shaheed Lance Naik Munshi Shaheed Rauf, Shaheed Sepoy Hamidur Rahman, Shaheed Sepoy Muhammad Mustafa Kamal, Shaheed Ruhul Amin, Shaheed Flight Lieutenant M Matiar Rahman and Shaheed Lance Naik Noor Mohammad Sheikh on the occasion.

She will also meet freedom fighters holding Bir Uttam, Bir Bikram and Bir Protik awards and their nearest ones.

Similar receptions will also be hosted by the Chiefs of Staff of the Army, Navy and Air Force at their respective service headquarters.

In the evening, the Prime Minister will host a reception at Sena Kulgja.

One burnt alive, 100 shanties gutted in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Nov 20: An aged woman was roasted alive in a fire that gutted over 100 shanties at a slum in Madarbari area last night, fire brigade sources said. The identity of the victim could not be known.

The fire originated from electric short circuit at around 2 am and it was brought under control after two hours by the fire brigade personnel, the sources said.

The slum dwellers raised hue and cry while running for safety after the fire broke out, witnesses said.

Hundreds of people from nearby areas rushed to the spot and tried to extinguish the fire.

Loss of property in the fire is yet to be ascertained, fire brigade said.

About 500 slum dwellers were rendered homeless by the fire, sources added.

Lathials attack police, loot rifles

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Nov 20: At least 50 people including seven police personnel were injured and three rifles with 13 bullets were looted in an armed clash between the lathials and police over paddy harvest at Char Fenua under Melendigan thana of the district today.

According to police and witnesses, about 500 lathials came to the area to loot paddy at around 11 am.

When the on-duty policemen led by SI Abu Taher tried to resist the lathials they attacked Abu Taher and some other policemen and snatched three rifles with 13 bullets.

Mahbub-Jalal Panel sweeps BMA polls

Pro-Awami League panel led by Dr Mahbub-e-Rashid and Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin swept the Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) election held on Thursday, reports UNB.

Mahbub-Jalal panel won all the posts of the national executive committee except the vice-president post for Rajshahi division, a BMA source said last night.

The incumbent BMA president Dr Mahbub-e-Rashid defeated his opponent Dr M A Majed by 902 votes, securing 6,699 votes. Dr Majed got 5,597 votes.

Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin has been elected as secretary general defeating Dr Abdul Hadi by 1,847 votes. Dr Jalal secured 6,978 votes while his rival Dr Hadi bagged 5,111 votes.