

# The Daily Star

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## Resolving electoral disputes

# President's query brings forth legal inadequacies

By Nurul Kabir

The presidential query over the Election Commission probe into the alleged irregularities in the Tangail-8 by-election has brought into open some legal shortcomings about resolving electoral disputes.

On receipt of specific allegations of rigging of votes by the ruling party candidate, the EC announced a four-member committee, headed by the Additional District Judge of Tangail,

two days after the vote on November 15. There were allegations that irregularities took place in 19 centres.

The Commission suspended the process of the gazette notification of the election results pending the investigation.

Other members of the probe body are a sub-judge and an assistant judge of Tangail and an EC deputy secretary. But on Sunday, President

Shahabuddin Ahmed summoned acting law secretary N K Chakrabarti for some clarification over the issue.

As Chakrabarti told The Daily Star yesterday, the President made two legal queries.

Does the EC have the authority to order an investigation into the allegations of irregularities — instead of referring the matter to the election tribunal — and suspend the pro-

cess of the gazette notification of the election results?

And, even if the EC enjoys the authority to order such an investigation before gazette notification of the results, does it have the authority to constitute a probe body with judicial officers?

The Secretary replied in the negative.

"I told the honourable President See Page 12 Col 1

## Two shot in city

By Staff Correspondent

Extortionists shot a trader at a market at Tikatuli while a young man was shot near Nilkhet crossing in the city yesterday.

Hospital sources identified the injured as Golam Mustafa, 40, a resident of East Rampura and Abu Jahid, 22, a resident of Nilkhet Babupura slum.

With bullet wounds Mustafa and Jahid were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Golam Mustafa, a trader at Rajdhani Super Market at Tikatuli was shot when he refused to pay toll to a gang of about 4 extortionists at about 4 pm yesterday. Mustafa was shot in his left leg, sources said.

In another incident, a young See Page 11 Col 7

## Washington to back Dhaka as LDCs' leader at Seattle

The US government proposed to work jointly with Bangladesh for forging a common approach to providing preferential treatment to LDCs at the third WTO Ministerial meeting at Seattle in Washington, reports UNB.

US Ambassador to Bangladesh John C Holzman yesterday handed a letter of the US government to Bangladesh's Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed in this regard.

Conveying their desire US trade representative Charlene Barshefsky, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Secretary of Labour Alexis M Herman

sent the joint letter to Bangladesh, the spokesman for the least developed countries.

Elaborating the US proposals for the Seattle meeting and the contents of the letter, Ambassador Holzman said: "US is favouring the discussion for providing special and preferential treatment to the LDCs, including duty-free access to importing countries."

In his instant response to the US proposal, Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed said Bangladesh was very keen to work with USA in the Seattle meeting. See Page 12 Col 7

## State funeral for Sufia Kamal

The Cabinet has decided to give a state funeral to late poet Begum Sufia Kamal, reports UNB.

The day of her funeral will be observed as national mourning day and national flag hoisted half mast, it was decided at a regular Cabinet meeting yesterday with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

The meeting adopted a condolence resolution expressing deep shock and profound grief at the demise of Begum Sufia Kamal, a pioneer of women renaissance and the unwavering beacon of the great Language Movement.

The Cabinet congratulated See Page 11 Col 8

## Shab-e-Barat tonight

The holy Shab-e-Barat will be observed across the country tonight with due solemnity, reports UNB.

Muslims will seek divine mercy through prayers throughout the night.

The Islamic Foundation has taken elaborate programmes in observance of the holy Shab-e-Barat.

After Magreb prayers, Principal of Aliya Madrassah Moulana Salahuddin will speak on its significance of and how to observe the holy night.

After Esha at 7.30 pm, there will be *Nafl* prayers followed by discussion at 9.30 pm on the "importance of *Ibadat* in our life" by Hafez Moulana Rafiq Ahmad, Pesh Imam of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque.

*Nafl* prayers, discussion and *Ziqr* from 10.30 pm to 12.30 am will be conducted by Moulana Mustaq Ahmad, Khatib, Tejgaon Rail Station Jam-e-Mosque.

Discussion on importance of *Tahajjud* prayers will be held at 3 am. Mufti Moulana Nuruddin, Pesh Imam of Baitul Mukarram, is the speaker.

There will be *Tahajjud* and *Nafl* prayers at 4 am and *Fajr* jamaat at 5.20 am to be followed by Munajat, according to an Islamic Foundation press release.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia issued separate messages on the occasion.

## African students boycott IIT convocation

GAZIPUR, Nov 22: Some 28 students from African countries boycotted convocation of the Islamic Institute of Technology (IIT) today demanding international administration and teaching staff for the transnational institution, reports UNB.

The aggrieved students from eight African countries did not take degrees and diplomas from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in their bid to project their plea.

During the ceremony, the black students stayed in the sun outside the auditorium displaying posters and placards inscribed with their demand.

The students handed over a memorandum to the Prime Minister during her departure. The PM talked to them to know their problem.

Registrar of the Institute M A Afzal told UNB that 28 students from Cameroon, Niger, Somalia, Chad, Senegal, Sierra See Page 12 Col 5

## Holiday

The offices of The Daily Star will remain closed today on account of holy Shab-e-Barat.

Therefore, there will be no issue of the newspaper tomorrow.

## Inside Today

### Article

WTO Seattle Ministerial and the LDCs

by Dr Khalilur Rahman Page 4

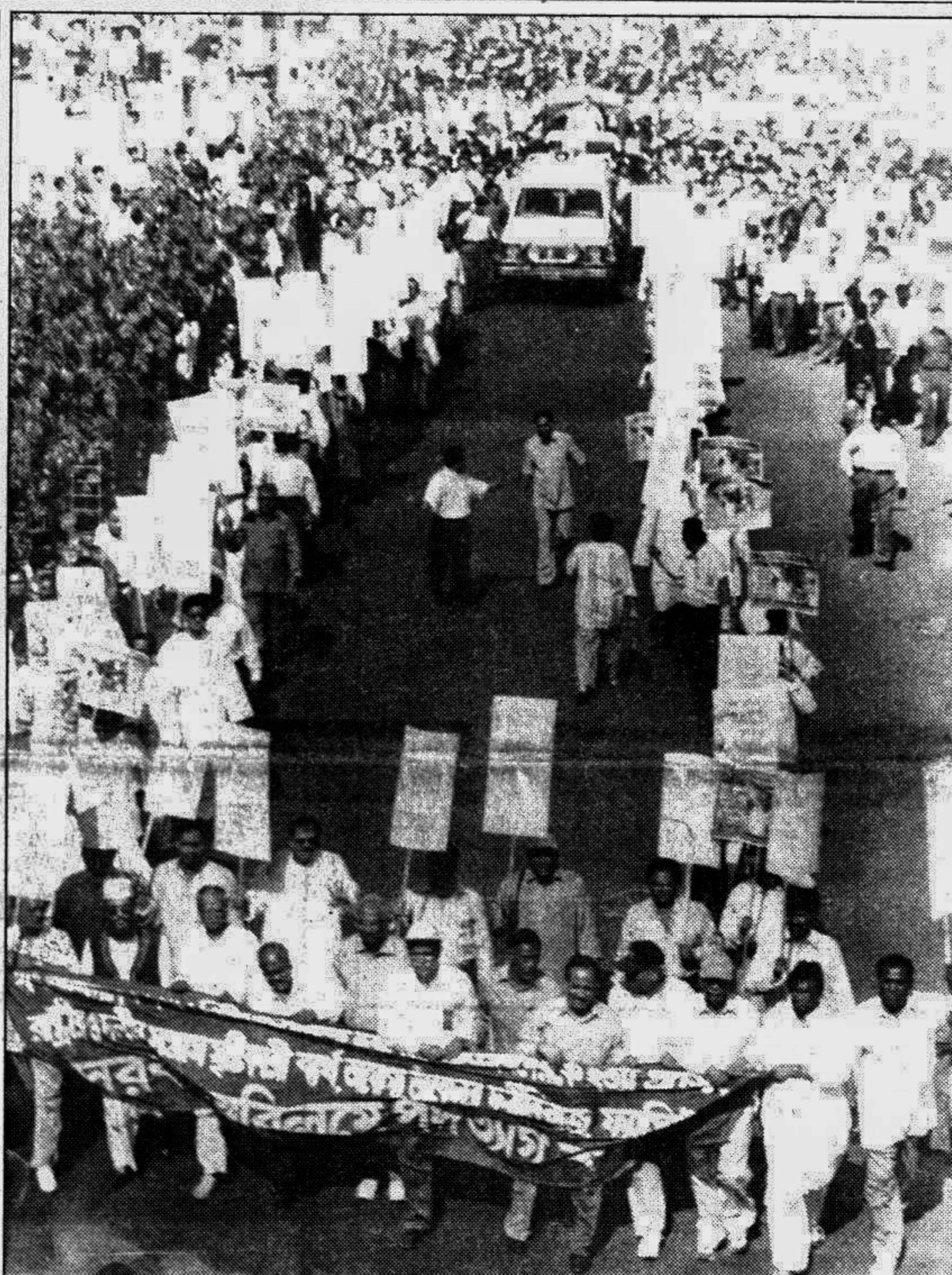
### Focus

Importance of Lailatul Barat; A day in the life of a trade diplomat Page 5

## Prayer Timings

November 23		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-15	5-45
Johr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-42	4-00
Maghrib	5-20	5-25
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation



Opposition MPs from BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami march down the main city streets yesterday with the Opposition leader Khaleda Zia riding on a jeep. —Star photo

## Over 100 Opposition MPs stage protest march

Resign immediately, Khaleda asks govt

By Staff Correspondent

One hundred two MPs from BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami led by Leader of the Opposition in Jaiya Sangsad Khaleda Zia marched through the city streets yesterday to protest "dishonouring" of the Sangsad by the Prime Minister and the Home Minister and "attempt on lives of MPs."

The march was also designed to press home the Opposition demand for immediate resignation of the Awami League government and early general elections.

Thousands of leaders and activists of BNP and its front organisations lined up on both sides of the streets carrying flowers and festoons with anti-government slogans. They cheered the marchers and many of them presented flowers to the

government which stripped women on the street. "Halt state and party terrorism."

Later, Khaleda Zia briefly addressed a huge gathering in front of the Press Club.

The BNP Chairperson asked the AL government to resign immediately and hand over power to a caretaker government as per constitutional provisions for holding of parliamentary polls.

The recent by-polls including those in Faridpur and Tangail clearly proved that no election under this government can be free, fair and neutral, she said.

All election observers, foreign missions and the media reported that the voting was not free and fair in the Tangail by- See Page 12 Col 8

## Processions, rallies in city today

By Staff Correspondent

The opposition BNP, Jatiya Party, Jagpa, ANA, Democratic League and Progressive Nationalist Party will organise separate rallies and bring out torch processions in the city tomorrow (Wednesday) afternoon in support of the hartal Thursday's countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal.

BNP-led opposition alliance has called for the general strike to press for immediate resignation of the government and early general polls. Fresh programmes will be announced during the Thursday's hartal, sources said.

However, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote will organise rallies and bring out See Page 12 Col 8

## Jewel's tragic death Murder case accusing four cops filed

By Court Correspondent

Elder brother of Shamsuddin Jewel who drowned in a sewer canal at South Kamalapur in the city on the night of November 15 following a police chase, filed a murder case with the CMM's court yesterday accusing three constables and a havildar.

Following the petition, Additional Metropolitan Magistrate Habibur Rahman ordered the OC of Motijheel thana to file a murder case after investigating the incident.

Earlier, Motijheel police had filed an unnatural death case on November 17 regarding the

incident.

Nuruddin Sohel, the victim's brother, in his petition said Jewel and his friend Ripon were going to Motijheel in a rickshaw at about 9 pm on November 15. Three constables — Zahur Huq, Amir and Masud — and Havildar Anul Bashar of Kamalapur police camp intercepted the rickshaw near the Ansar and Pratirakha Club.

The four security men forcibly took Tk 50 from Ripon and assaulted him. At this, Jewel became afraid and started See Page 12 Col 3

## She was a symbol of mother, source of inspiration

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said yesterday that the late poet Sufia Kamal was the symbol of an affectionate mother and the source of inspiration and guidance to all.

With tearful eyes and broken voice, Hasina recalled her association with Sufia Kamal whom she fondly called *fufu* (father's sister).

The Prime Minister, who is also chief of the Awami League, was speaking at a condolence meeting for the late poet in the city yesterday, organised by her party.

Hasina said the poet struggled all her life for establishing women's rights, democracy, Bangalee nationalism and a progressive society free from religious and social superstition, fundamentalism and communalism. But she was a pious Muslim.

Sufia Kamal was enlightened by great personalities like Begum Rokeya, Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam and herself became a great lady, she noted.

The poet's contribution to restoration of democracy and campaign against war criminals and fundamentalist forces would be remembered forever. Her ideals would continue to inspire us in our struggle in the days to come, Hasina observed.

The Prime Minister said she had planned to visit the ailing See Page 11 Col 7

## Khaleda was not invited in an appropriate manner: BNP

By Staff Correspondent

BNP yesterday said the party chief and Leader of the Opposition in parliament Khaleda Zia was not invited to the Armed Forces Day reception at Senakunja on Sunday in an "appropriate manner."

A good number of senior and junior leaders of the ruling party were invited to the function, but top BNP leaders including the party secretary general and MPs were not invited, a party press release claimed.

As a result, Khaleda Zia did not turn up although she had the desire to attend the function. But she gave message and wished success of the Armed Forces Day.

It was duly informed to a responsible officer in the Armed Forces Division that it would not be possible for the Leader of See Page 11 Col 7

## Campaign on Voyage of Discovery stayed

By Staff Correspondent

The High Court yesterday issued a stay order, till November 28 on all campaign activities of the "Voyage of Discovery", which is advertising Gold Leaf cigarettes.

The "Voyage of Discovery" reached Chittagong port on Sunday.

A Division Bench of the High Court comprising Justice Mohammad Fazlul Karim and Justice Mohammad Abdul Wahab Mia issued a rule upon the British American Tobacco, sponsor of the voyage, to show cause why the promotional activities should not be declared illegal.

The order followed a writ petition filed by a number of anti-tobacco organisations including Bangladesh Cancer Society, Bangladesh Anti Drug Federation and Consumer Association of Bangladesh.

In the petition they argued that activities of the Gold Leaf Yatch violated the country's laws and government's health policy. It was alleged that the campaign was aimed at attracting young people to smoking.

The writ petition was moved by Barrister Tania Amir, who argued that the Voyage of Discovery was part of an aggressive campaign to promote sale of cigarettes. See Page 12 Col 3

## No extra-constitutional means can remove my govt: Sharif

KARACHI, Nov 22: An anti-terrorist court today ordered a defiant ex-premier Nawaz Sharif confined to jail until Friday when he is to return to court for the formal filing of treason and hijacking charges, report AP, AFP.

Speaking to reporters inside the courtroom, a relaxed Sharif, wearing the traditional *shalwar kameez*, said he and his codetendants were innocent.

"We are all innocent... we are not involved in any of these accusations or allegations that have been framed (against) us," said Sharif. "We know we have not done anything wrong."

In another development, Sharif's party asked the Supreme Court today to overturn last month's dismissal of

his elected government in a military coup.

The Pakistan Muslim League asked the court to set aside the "illegal and unconstitutional" overthrow of the Sharif government and the suspension of the federal and provincial assemblies, lawyers said.

The petition was filed by advocates Malik Mohammad Rafiq Rajwana and Khalid Anwer, who was law minister in Sharif's cabinet.

The army has accused Sharif and several others of trying to kill the army chief by refusing to allow his aircraft to land in Karachi on Oct 12, the same day that the military staged its bloodless coup and overthrow Pakistan's elected government. The aircraft landed but reportedly with only seven minutes of

fuel remaining.

The army has charged Sharif and several others with treason and hijacking, charges that carry the death penalty or life in prison.

Sharif assailed the army takeover as unconstitutional and unjustified.

"We are a democratically elected government... No one has the power to remove us from office through extra-constitutional means. Whatever has been done has no basis, no justification."

"The action which was taken on Oct 12 was... a serious action," he said. "They are trying to justify the action by trying to dramatise the issue" of the aircraft, which led to the charges against him. See Page 11 Col 8

## Wholesale hike of wages and salaries should be stopped

FBCCI chief tells AGM

FBCCI President Abdul Awal Mintoo yesterday sought more pragmatic steps from the government for boosting the country's economy, reports UNB.

The fields where he recommended the steps included economic reform, reducing public sector expenditure, strengthening denationalisation, increasing internal resources, proper use of foreign aid, appropriate implementation of ADP and controlling inflation.

"A well-thought out plan is necessary for reducing revenue expenditure," Mintoo said presiding over the annual general meeting (AGM) of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and

Industry (FBCCI) for 1998-99 at its office.

Wholesale hike of wages and salaries should also be stopped, he said. "Wages and salaries in the public sector should be determined as per skills and productivity after cutting down the excess manpower."

The FBCCI president, however, praised the government for adopting various steps especially for export that significantly increased country's foreign trade.

In 1997-98, country's export was 5.16 billion US dollar, which was 17 per cent higher than the previous year.

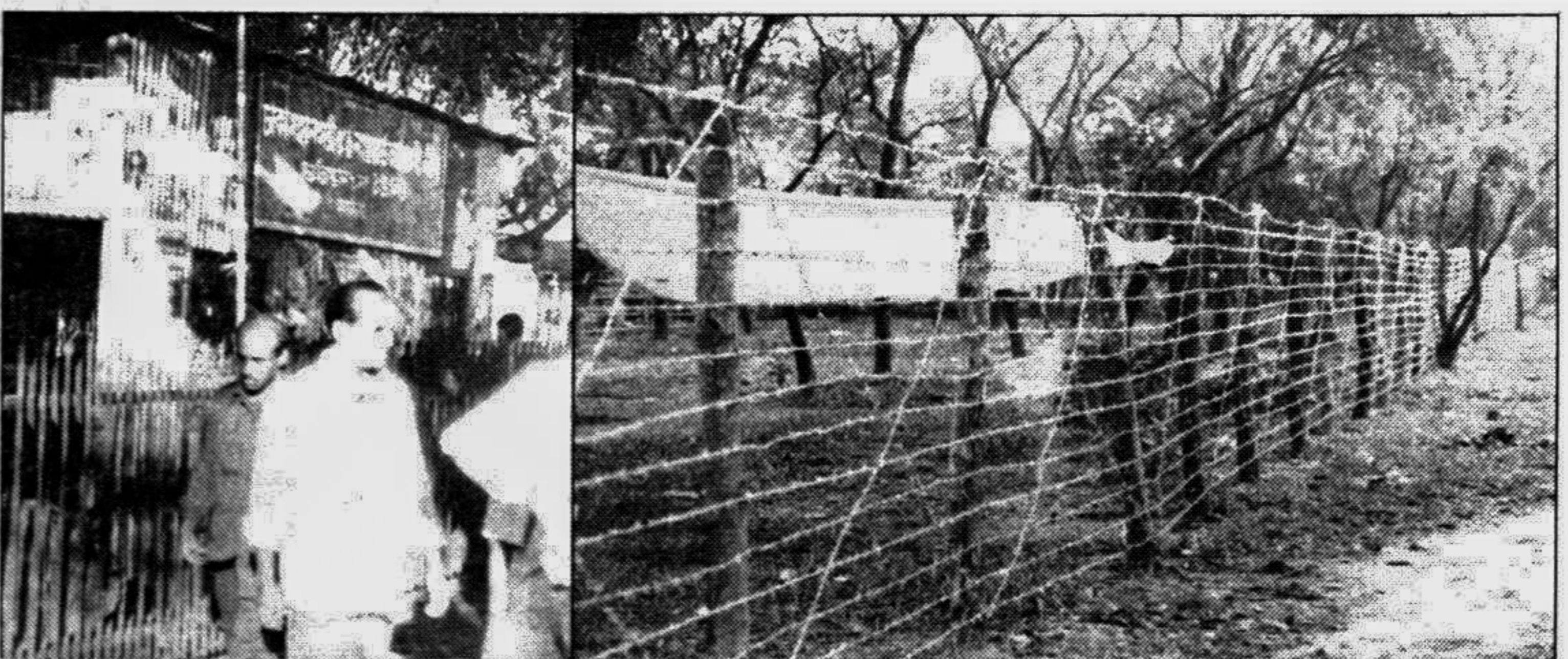
He said the contribution of private sector in the export was

92 per cent. "But our export is not being diversified."

Mintoo once again blasted hartal and country's political instability saying it was seriously hampering country's economy and the businessmen were the worst sufferers.

Echoing the anxiety of traders and industrialists, he told the AGM that the FBCCI was trying to get rid of the hurdle to accelerate financial activities, a must for economic emancipation of the nation.

"We met with the Prime Minister and the opposition leaders urging them to create a congenial political atmosphere and give up disastrous pro- See Page 11 Col 6



STARTING POINT: The barbed wire fence (right) raised on Tuesday by DCC at Osmany Udyan, apparently to construct a hawkers' market, starts from the side of an encroacher, Gulistan no 1 unit of city Awami League (left). —Star photo

## Latest encroachers of Osmany Udyan

By Special Correspondent

The Osmany Udyan is facing more encroachers than ever before even though a recent government decision to shift the venue of an international conference centre for NAM summit has saved the trees, speakers at a citizens' rally said yesterday.

The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) is ironically among those trying to rob its open space and trees, they said.

The park's latest encroachers also include Titas Gas, Police, Bangladesh Railway and Awami League's Gulistan No 1 unit.

The speakers expressed concern at the DCC move to convert parts of the park into a market, taking over a vast chunk on the southern side. It has already fenced the area with barbed

wire last week.

The meeting, chaired by convener of the movement to save 11000 trees of Osmany Udyan Professor Serajul Islam Choudhury, was addressed among others by Left Front leaders Mujahidul Islam Selim, Tipu Biswas, Golam Mahmud, Ruhin Hossain Prince, Dr Ahmed Kamal, Dr Tasnim Siddique and playwright Mamunur Rashid, poet Abu Bakar Siddik and Humayun Kabir.

They appealed to all concerned to free the DCC managed park, the last patch of green between old and new Dhaka, of all encroachers and restore its pristine condition.

Police yesterday for the first See Page 12 Col 3