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Fall in water level BIWTC may have to suspend operation of big ferries

By Staff Correspondent
Ferry movement in Aricha-Nagarbari and Aricha-Daulatdia routes is seriously threatened due to further fall in water level in the Padma and the Jamuna during the last one week.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) sources said yesterday they might have to 'suspend operation of big ferries' if water level continues to fall for another two days.

When contacted, BIWTC General Manager Mohammad Ali said, "All ferries in Aricha-Nagarbari route have been instructed to carry 'half load' to avoid getting stuck up in mid-channels."

Ferry service in Aricha-Daulatdia route is operating with 'great caution'. "Only a single channel route is in use."

All went on, "We have taken all precautions for the dry season to avoid ferries hitting shoals. Despite that, three ferries got stranded due to low water level in the last one week."

The ferry terminal at Nagarbari is being shifted to Pratibpur, further downstream. At Aricha, ferries can now anchor at two terminals out of the five due to low level of water.

Opposition's torch processions in city today

By Staff Correspondent
The BNP-led opposition alliance will hold rallies and bring out torch processions in different parts of the city today in support of countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal on Sunday and Monday.

The component parties of the alliance—BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote had called the hartal demanding resignation of the government and early general elections under a caretaker government.

The BNP will bring out torch processions from 11 points, including its party headquarters today at about 5:00 pm, said a party press release.

The torch processions of Jatiya Party will be brought out from all thanas of the city, said a press release last night.

Jamaat-e-Islami will hold a rally at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram Mosque and bring out a torch procession.

Islami Oikya Jote will stage a rally near the Paltan Mosque and bring out a torch procession.

JU reopens today

By DU Correspondent

The Jahangirnagar University reopens today after 65 days. Classes, however, will resume tomorrow, JU sources said yesterday.

The university was closed on September 30 in the face of student agitation against increased admission and tuition fees.

Inside Today

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**Democracy is
the Only Path,
but Leaders
Must Deliver**

by Dr Ahmed
Bedruzzaman
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Business

Scientists seek govt
assistance for boosting
software industry

Lok Sabha okays bill to
end state monopoly in
insurance sector

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Prayer Timings

December 4		
Fajr	5:15	5:45
Zohr	12:45	1:15
Asr	3:42	4:00
Maghrib	5:18	5:23
Esha	7:00	7:30

Source: Islamic Foundation

Over 100 vehicles damaged: BDR deployed Two killed, 200 injured as followers of 2 peers clash

By Staff Correspondent

At least two persons were killed and over 200 people injured in clashes involving police and followers of two peers (spiritual leader) at Madanpur under Bandar thana in Narayanganj yesterday.

The clashes broke out when followers of one peer allegedly attempted to spoil a conference of those of the other.

The clashes spread in the areas from Kanchpur to Rugganj, disrupting traffic movement on Dhaka-Narayanganj road throughout the day.

About 100 motor vehicles were damaged and many more set afire during the clashes. Four of those were carrying magistrates on duty.

Police said they were forced to open fire when the followers of one peer attacked a petrol pump where the magistrates had taken shelter.

The identities of the dead could not be known immediately, police said. The injured were admitted to the Narayanganj Hospital, Narayanganj General Hospital, Dhaka Medi-

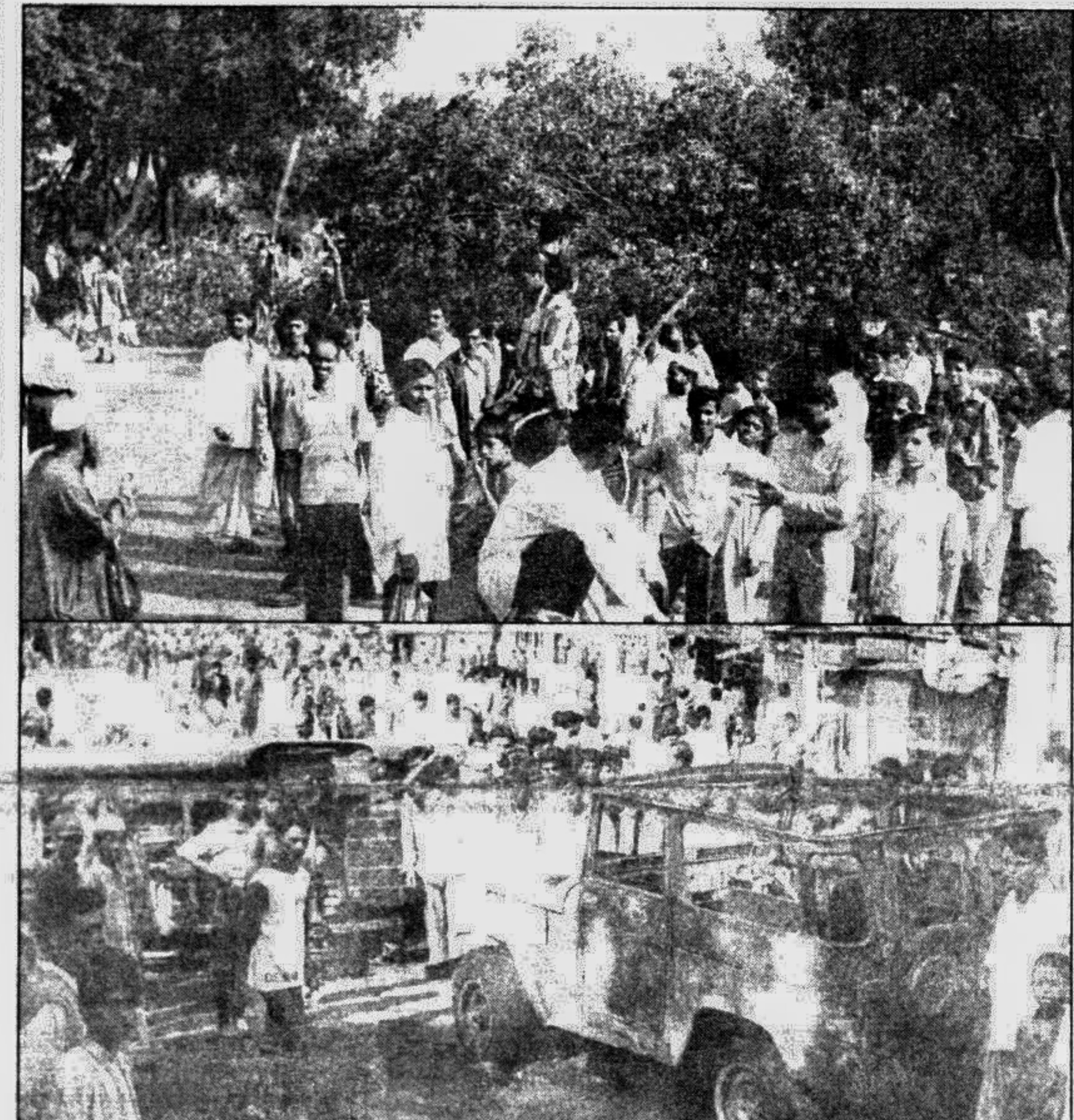
cal College Hospital and some other hospitals and local clinics.

Additional Police and BDR were deployed at the trouble spots in the afternoon to bring the situation under control, police said.

As the Deputy Commissioner and the SP of Narayanganj, along with other senior police officials, were still on the spot, they were not available for comment late last night.

According to sources, yesterday

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Followers of the peer of Charmonai put up barricade on the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway by felling trees yesterday (top), and agitated followers of one peer set ablaze four police vehicles at Madanpur, Narayanganj (above). — Star photo

Legal tangles block Machine Tools transfer to army

By Rafiq Hasan

Legal complications have blocked the Privatisation Board's attempt to transfer ownership of the debt-ridden Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory (BMTF) at Gazipur to the army.

Board sources said the factory was scheduled to be handed over to the army on October 31. But it could not be done because of some legal complications.

"Every thing was progressing smoothly and we had even prepared invitation cards for the handing over ceremony. But it was cancelled at the last moment," said a high official of the board.

The factory was supposed to be merged with the nearby Ordnance Factory run by the army, he said. "But when we went for making gazette notification regarding the merger, we found that there were some disputes over the factory land."

Even there were some cases

pending with court for long regarding the disputes and claims for compensation for the land, acquired in the sixties when the factory was set up, another official said. "If it was merged with the Ordnance Factory, it would have been much difficult to solve those disputes and claims."

He however pointed out that as per the government decision, the factory would be handed over to the army, but it would remain separate entity. The process is underway.

The Prime Minister's Office recently asked the chairman of the Privatisation Board to send all information and documents regarding the BMTF.

The decision to hand over the BMTF to the army was taken early last year. The factory was closed down in 1994 as it incurred huge losses over the years. Its total liability was then estimated at more than Tk 300 crore.

BIMST-EC meet in Delhi to deal with Trans-Asian Highway

By M Anwarul Haq

An early start of work on the proposed Trans-Asian Highway linking five Asian countries and setting up of a regional airline connecting their capitals is expected to dominate the agenda of the next BIMSTEC ministerial meeting due to be held in Delhi in early February, according to diplomatic sources here.

The meeting, earlier scheduled for this month, was deferred due to elections in India. The meeting will closely examine the possibility of starting the Highway work at an early date and try to work out modalities and 'facilitation services' for linking the five member countries.

Discussions on establishing 'multi-modal communication'

including air and sea links are also expected to be discussed at the meeting.

The first BIMSTEC ministerial meeting was held in Dhaka on December 17, 19 last year. It was participated by ministers and officials from Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand.

BIMSTEC, a new regional grouping comprising the five countries bordering the rim of the Bay of Bengal, was launched in Bangkok on June 6, 1997.

The Delhi meet is expected to give it a more durable and concrete shape. State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury said talking to The Daily Star.

ESCAP has been authorised

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Rokonuzzaman Khan 'Dadabhai' passes away

By Staff Correspondent

The revered grandfatherly figure for the country's children, renowned child litterateur and founder of Kachi Kanchar Mela Rokonuzzaman Khan Dadabhai is no more.

He died of a heart attack at the Suhrawardy Hospital in the city yesterday afternoon. He was 75.

Dadabhai felt severe pain in his chest while returning to his Sarat Gupta Road residence in old Dhaka from the Ittefaq office at about noon, family sources said.

He was rushed to the General Hospital and then to the Suhrawardy Hospital. Doctors there declared him dead at about 2:30 p.m. after trying their best to keep him alive on artificial respiratory system.

A shock wave swept the city

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One shot-dead, alleged mugger beaten to death in Chittagong

By Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Dec 3: Two persons were killed in separate incidents in Razoan and Fatukchhari here the last night. A young man was shot dead at a wedding ceremony at Hamzarpara by an unidentified assailant of Pashim Gujora under Raizan thana at 11:45 last night.

The victim was identified as Md. Giasuddin, 24. The assailant shot him when the ceremony was going on.

In another incident, one Abu Taiyab 23, reportedly a mugger was killed in mob beating at Doulatpur Bazar under Fati-

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Clinton signs convention banning child labour

SEATTLE, Washington, Dec 3: President Bill Clinton yesterday signed an international convention banning abusive child labour and vowed to make workers' rights a central tenet in a new round of global trade talks, reports AFP.

Clinton's renewed emphasis on the need to incorporate core labour standards into the mandate of the WTO has sparked resistance from developing countries and jeopardized hopes for a smooth finish to a key trade conference here.

Indonesian Trade and Industry Minister Jusuf Kalla, reflecting the views of developing countries, rejected the notion that labour standards should be part of the WTO's responsibility.

"Indonesia has serious difficulties with the proposal that the WTO should pursue further work in this area," he told a WTO ministerial plenary session here.

Clinton signed the convention a day after addressing ministers from the 135-member World Trade Organization who are trying to draft an agenda for a new round of multilateral trade liberalization negotiations.

Finding a formula for the inclusion of labour issues in the new round looms large as a major stumbling block to delegates racing against time to wrap up the conference today.

Developing nations suspect

that the concern professed by rich countries for workers' rights is in effect designed to ensure the developed world's dominance on international markets.

Clinton on Wednesday, in an interview with the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, made clear his preference for trade sanctions against countries that violate basic labour standards — remarks denounced by the European Union as "economic imperialism."

"We can't dictate to developing countries how to run their societies," John Richardson, the European Union's Washington representative, told Deutsche Welle said TV of Ger-

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Separation of judiciary Govt to take move after SC verdict: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina last night announced that the government would take initiative to separate the Judiciary from the Executive after receiving the Supreme Court judgement, reports UNB.

"The bill for separation of the Judiciary has already been drafted and we must take effective steps for its enactment after receiving the (Supreme Court) judgement," she told judges at the annual conference of ECS (Judiciary) Association at Osmani auditorium.

The Supreme Court yesterday gave partial judgement about separation of the Judiciary following an appeal by the government.

Pointing to the essence of the Bill on separation of the Judiciary, the prime minister said the Judiciary is enjoying full freedom under her government and all transfers and promotions of judges are being done in consultation with the Supreme Court, which, she said, was not done in the past.

Hasina requested the judges to ensure the rule of law and justice so that people could get judgement quickly.

"Otherwise," she cautioned, "people's trust and confidence in the Judiciary would erode."

"We know judges are to remain steadfast in dispensation of justice within many constraints. But if there by any lapses, that may cause loss of confidence among the people, which may be dangerous and unwanted in a democracy," she warned.

Underscoring the need for

accountability of all three organs of state, the prime minister said each organ of the state must be accountable to the people. If it happens, it would be easier to establish the rule of law and achieve socio-economic development in the country.

Presided over by Dhaka District and Sessions Judge Anwarul Huq, the conference was also addressed by Law and Justice Minister Abdul Matin Khasru, acting Law Secretary N K Chakrobarty and retired judge Khondaker Abu Bakr.

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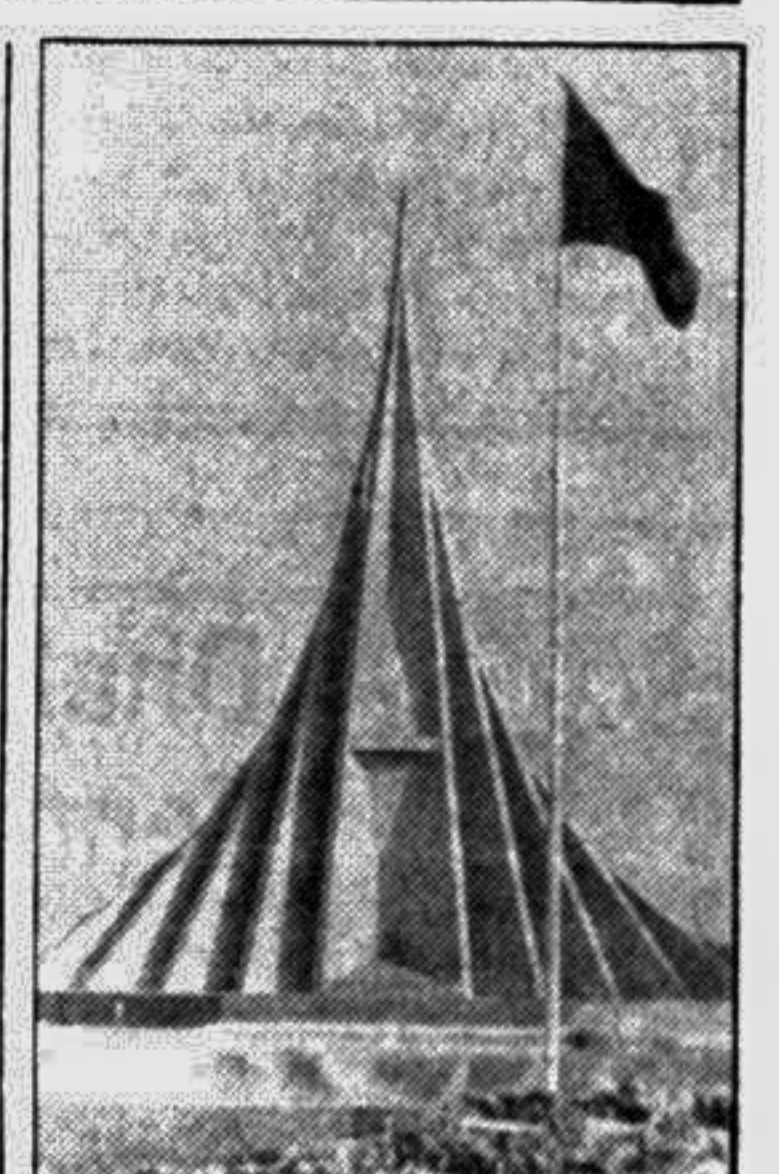
Bangabandhu murder Court verdict will be executed by 2000: Nasim

PARIPUR, Dec 3: Home Minister Mohammad Nasim accused the BNP-led opposition alliance of 'destroying the country's overall economy by illogically calling frequent hartal, reports UNB.

"The opposition alliance by calling hartal has also been hindering development process of the country initiated by the present government," the home minister said at a public meeting at Nikkurdia Government Primary School ground in sadar thana today.

Presided over by Gerda UP Chairman Zahidur Rahman, the meeting was also addressed

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Reunion of FFs, film show on liberation war

By Staff Correspondent

The Month of Victory is being observed in the country by various organisations through different programmes.

In the city, the programmes on the fourth day of the Month include a reunion of freedom fighters, discussion meetings and film show.

Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) will organise a lecture series on the War of Liberation at 4 pm.

A reunion of freedom fighters of the Ninth Sector will be held at 10 am at the Engineers Institute.

A film, "Dushshoho Ekattor", based on the Liberation War will be shown at 7 pm at Alliance Francaise.

Meanwhile, Joy Bangla Sangshkritik Oikya Jote yesterday formed a 101-member committee to organise a five-day cultural programme from December 12.

Assault protested Remove AC Humayun, punish other cops: CRAB

By Staff Correspondent

The Crime Reporters' Association of Bangladesh (CRAB) yesterday brought out a silent procession in the city to protest against the alleged police assault on a crime reporter on Wednesday.

The CRAB leaders said they would announce tougher programme if the authorities failed

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Kader Siddique to float political party Dec 23

By Staff Correspondent

Kader Siddique Bir Uttam is going to float a new political party.

The party will be launched at a 'grand convention' of 'delegates' representing pro-liberation forces, professionals and intellectuals at the Jatiya Press Club in the city on December 23, Siddique told The Daily Star yesterday.

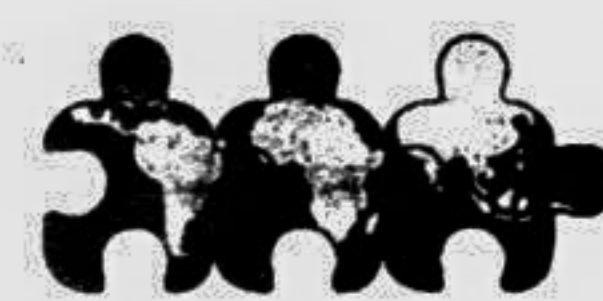
The party will be a forum of pro-liberation forces and the downtrodden. It has become necessary to float such a party as Awami League has now shifted from Bangabandhu's policies and principles," the legendary freedom fighter said

over telephone from Kishoreganj.

A convention preparatory committee will be announced on December 10. About 1000 'delegates' from across the country will be invited to the convention, sources close to him said here. Siddique is returning to the capital on December 6, they said.

Besides the 'delegates', a selected group of people from across the country will also be invited. But the list of invitees will not include any one from the big two political parties — ruling Awami League and oppo-

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03 December 1999

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Inaugural Session of the Expert Group Meeting on Reproductive Health Research Capacity Development, which was scheduled to be held on 05 December 1999 at 09:00 AM at the Sasakawa Auditorium of ICDDR,B has been cancelled due to unavoidable circumstances. The organizers of the Meeting deeply regrets inconveniences caused to our valued guests and well-wishers.

All other sessions of the Meeting shall be held as per a revised agenda. The participants will be informed over telephone.

Balla Musa Silla
Executive Director
Partners in Population and Development

D-750

4 BNP men held: Hartal on polls day Dr Alauddin's election rally attacked: 30 hurt

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Dec 3: At least 30 people were injured when an election meeting came under attack on Thanapara Primary School premises in Charchat thana last night.

The meeting was organised as part of election campaign for Dr Mohammad Alauddin, the Awami League candidate in by-election in Rajshahi-5 constituency.

Alauddin was the chief guest in the meeting.

An anti-election procession allegedly organised by BNP-led opposition alliance suddenly attacked the meeting. Both the groups were locked in clash and

exploded crackers during the clash.

The attackers also damaged furniture of the school, a motorcycle and the vehicle of Alauddin, who escaped the scene with the help of police and his supporters.

The seriously injured — Bipul, Liton, Mokibur and Janal — were admitted to local Thana Health Complex.

Police arrested local BNP leaders Monam Master, Helal Uddin, Nazrul Islam, and Kanu from their residences the same night.

A case was filed with

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One killed, 3 injured as gunmen attack rivals

By Staff Correspondent

One person was killed and three others were injured when gunmen attacked their rivals at Bat Tala on Shantinagar Bazaar Road in the city yesterday, police said.

The dead has been identified as Mosharraf Hossain Sada, 28, son of Abdul Aziz, a resident of Shantinagar Bazaar area while the injured are Bazlur Rahman and Sajjadul Islam Sajju, students of Habibullah Bahar College and Azizul Huc Babul, a cameraman of the FDC. Bazlur Rahman also is a brother of the deceased Sada.

All the four were taken to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). But Sada who was shot in the chest died at the hospital. Bazlur was shifted to

the Orthopaedic (Pangul) Hospital and Sajjad to the Chest Diseases Hospital while Babul was discharged after first aid.

Hospital sources quoting witnesses said the incident took place at about 4 pm when Sada and his brother Bazlur were talking with their friends at two nearby shops — Arbering Video and NK Trading.

A gang led by one Asif of Gopibagh arrived there by two auto-rickshaws and started firing at the two brothers, the sources said.

The gunmen created panic in the area firing several rounds of blank shots before leaving the spot, the sources added.

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