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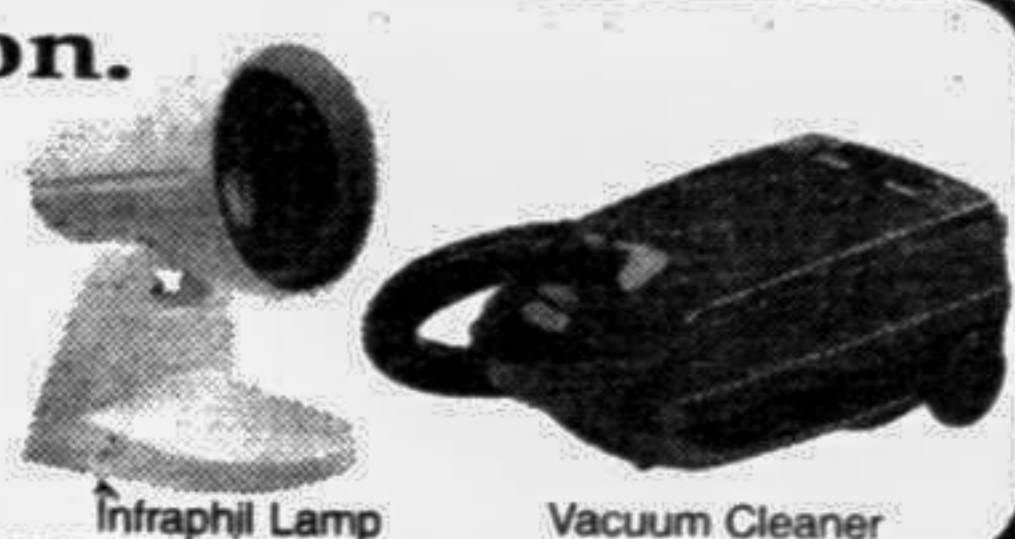
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Centre for Mother Language Practice & Research to be set up: PM

By Staff Reporter

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called for sincere efforts to use Bangla in all spheres and to enrich the language, Bangalee culture and heritage.

She declared that a Centre for Mother Language Practice and Research will be set up in Dhaka.

The call came at a grand and colourful rally at the city's Paltan Maidan, organised to celebrate UNESCO's declaration of February 21 as International Mother Language Day.

"Today is the day of celebration... We got international recognition for our martyrs who sacrificed their lives for upholding the honour of our mother tongue. We feel proud that Bangla is our mother language," she said.

Paying glowing tributes to the language martyrs Hasina said the historic Language Movement started in 1948 and got fruition in 1952. She also paid tributes to the memory of martyrs in 1969, 1971 and during the anti-autocracy movement.

The Language Movement led the nation towards its struggle for independence in 1971 under the leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Hasina remembered Nobel Laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore for his great contribution to enrich the Bangla and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for upholding its honour by delivering his speech in the mother tongue at the UN in 1974.

She said every citizen should be sincere in having education in the mother tongue and using it in all spheres of national life. Samples of all languages will be collected and research done at the mother language centre to enrich those arrangements will be made at the proposed centre so that people can learn different languages, she added.

Apparently moved by the international recognition to the 21st February and the celebrations, she said December is the month of joy and pride. This is the month when the Bengalee nation achieved independence.

Sheikh Hasina said, "We are committed to build a nation free from hunger, poverty and illiteracy by materialising the spirit of the Liberation War and the Language Movement."

Special Court to try cases against Shikdar from Jan 1

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Dec 7: The Special Court set up here to try cases against Ershad Shikdar will start functioning from January 1 next year.

The court will take up the Khalid Murder Case first, sources concerned said today.

Meanwhile, the Police Commissioner has decided to ask three former officials of KMP to show cause why action should not be taken against them for concealing two murder cases against Ershad Shikdar.

These officials deleted Shikdar's name from the charge sheets of Mouze Ali and Nantu murder cases with 'malafide intention'.

It has been found after re-checking case dockets that the said police officials AC Yakub Khandaker, AC Ruhul Amin and Inspector Shawkat Ali Khan deleted name of Shikdar from the charge sheet despite sufficient evidences against him about his involvement in the murders.

Mouze Ali was murdered on October 10, 1994 and Nantu on March 30, 1990. Both the victims were JP activists.

The FIR was lodged with Khalishpur thana accusing 13 people for murdering Mouze Ali. But the then OC Shawkat Ali Khan conducted a 'mock' investigation and submitted charge sheet favouring Ershad Shikdar and six others.

The incumbent OC of Khalishpur thana Kamrul Islam has been asked to re-investigate the case.

Besides, the FIR lodged with Khulna Thana on March 30, 1990 accused eight persons for murdering Nantu.

The case was later transferred to DB, AC of Detective Branch Yakub Ali submitted charge sheet deleting name of Shikdar.

The case was first investigated by AC Ruhul Amin who threatened the complainant Osman Gani for lodging FIR

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\$115m ADB loan for Southwest Road Network project

The Government and the Asian Development Bank signed a loan agreement for 115 million US dollars to finance Southwest Road Network Development Project aimed at building a sound communications link among all parts of the country, reports UNB.

Bangladesh Ambassador to the Philippine Reazul Hossain and ADB President Tadao Chino signed the agreement on behalf of their respective sides in Manila, according to a message received in Dhaka.

The project will open a shorter and more cost-effective east-west corridor after Dhaka-Chittagong corridor linking Dhaka with Mongla Port, Khulna, Benapole and Jessore.

In addition, Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga 54-km road will be improved and 38-km Bhanga-Bhatiapara road and 74-km Bhatiapara-Gopalganj-Town Noapara road and 450-meter-long bridge over the river Arial Khan will be constructed under the scheme.

BCS body resents

No progress in implementing 8-pt demand

By Special Correspondent

The central committee of the BCS Co-ordination Committee yesterday expressed resentment over what it called the failure of the authorities to implement its eight-point demand, submitted to the Prime Minister on November 17.

A meeting of the steering committee of the co-ordination committee noted that there had been no progress since its programme of wearing black badges for three days, three-hour token abstention from work and rally before submitting the memorandum to the PM containing the demand.

The eight-point demand include repeal of the upgrading of the 321 posts for the BCS (Admn) cadres. The meeting chaired by M.A. Hashem, acting president of the committee, expressed deep resentment over what it said continuation of promotion to the posts of deputy secretary and above on the basis of a quota system which had been rejected by almost all cadres.

It demanded suspension of the promotion process and making it on the basis of open competition and merit.

Among others Choudhury Khalequzzaman, secretary general of co-ordination committee, Krishibid Nazrul Islam and Professor Kafiluddin participated in the discussions.

3 shot by armed gang in city

By Staff Correspondent

Three people, including a woman were shot by an armed gang at a restaurant at South Shajahanpur in the city yesterday morning.

The injured were identified as Rashidul Alam Babu, son of Waliullah, a resident of Dhakkin Khan, Moni Begum, wife of Tota Mian of Shajahanpur Railway Colony and Shahidul Alam.

Babu received bullet in his back, Shahidul in his right leg and Moni Begum in her head. They were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), hospital sources said.

The gang entered the restaurant at around 9:30 am and opened fire.

Police could not tell the reason behind the attack while local people said that the armed gang attacked the hotel to chase their rivals.

Police, however, said that one person was injured in the attack.

No case was filed with Motiheel thana in this connection till filing of this report last night.

Controversy over death of army officer's wife

By Staff Correspondent

Controversy rose centering the death of an army officer's wife after allegations were made yesterday that she was murdered.

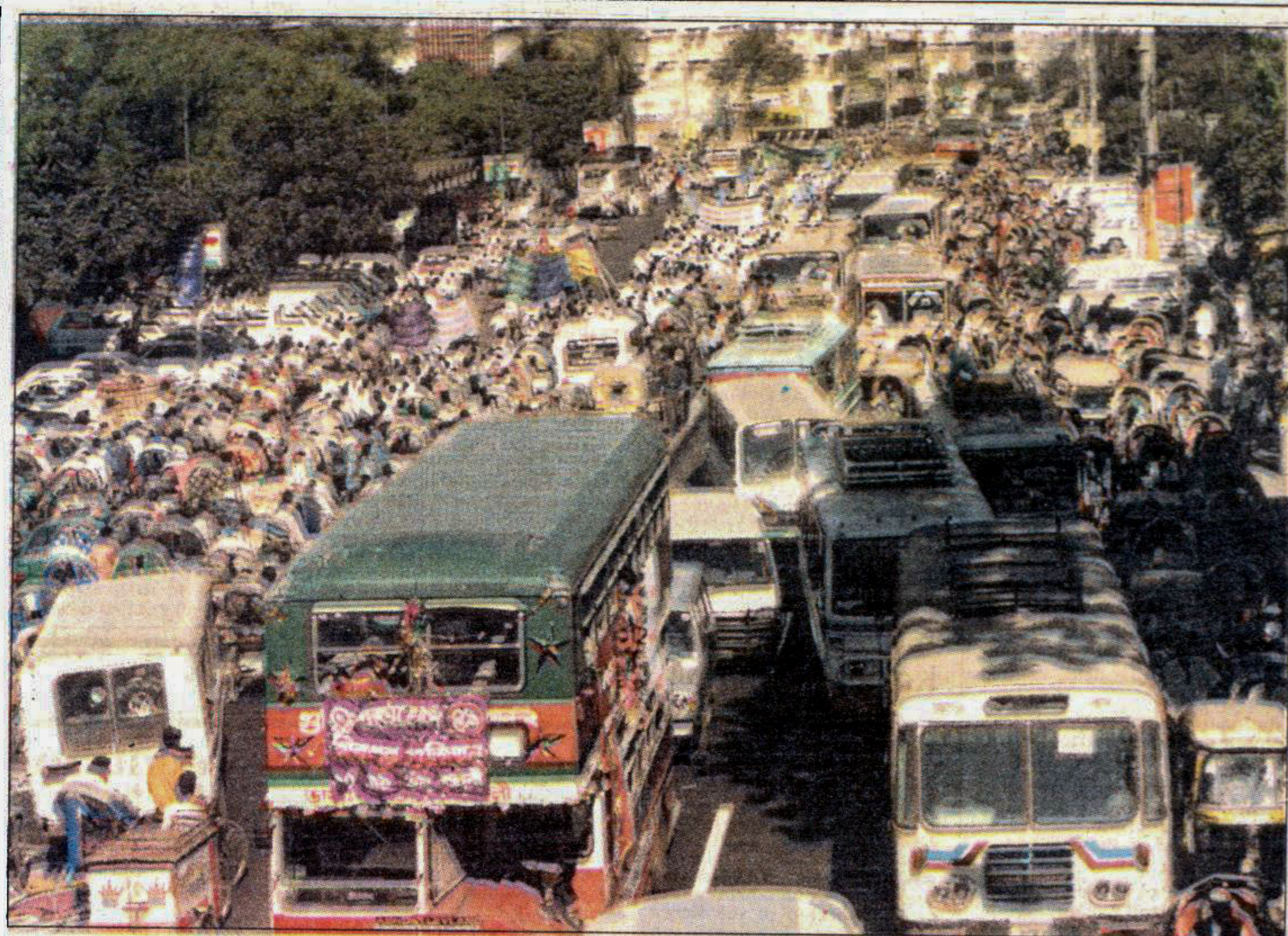
Police found Kamrunnahar Ruma, 25, hanging in her Army Staff Quarter residence at Banani in the city Monday afternoon.

Her body was handed over to her relatives after autopsy at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue yesterday.

Hospital sources said there was a scar mark on her neck, in addition to other marks on different parts of her body.

One of Ruma's relatives claimed that Ruma was murdered, hospital sources said. However, relatives of Major Asraf Haidar, Ruma's husband, said she was mentally ill and had made several attempts to commit suicide.

Gulshan police said they were waiting for the autopsy report. MS Alam Shajahan, the dead woman's cousin, filed an unnatural death case with Gulshan thana.



Celebrating UNESCO's recognition of International Mother Language Day stirs the pride in us all, but it's annoying and embarrassing when it disturbs public life at the government's behest. Look at the traffic jams that occurred when processions met a government rally. Could a little organisation and discipline be too much to ask? —Star photo

Ramadan likely from tomorrow

The holy month of Ramadan is expected to begin in the country tomorrow if the moon is sighted today, reports UNB.

National Moon Sighting Committee will sit today to ascertain the first Ramadan on the basis of sighting of the moon, said a press release.

State Minister for Religious Affairs Moulana Nurul Islam will preside over the meeting at the Islamic Foundation at 6 pm.

People have been requested to inform the committee over phone or fax if the moon is sighted in anywhere of the country.

The phone numbers are : 9559493, 9555947, 9555951, 9550280, 9559643, 9556407 and 9558337 and fax number-9563397.

Two women gangraped

By Staff Correspondent

Two women were gangraped by local hoodlums in separate incidents at Bashabo in the city within 24 hours ending at 7 pm yesterday, police and hospital sources said.

A widow, mother of an eight-year-old boy, was gangraped allegedly by some local hoodlums at East Bashabo area last night.

The victim, who reportedly serves as an ayah at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital, was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital last night.

In another incident a housewife was raped allegedly by a gang, led by the brother of her landlord, at East Bashabo under Shabubhag thana in the city on Monday night, police and hospital sources said.

The victim aged about 25 was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital the same day.

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Deadlock at Shahjalal Varsity continues JCD, Shibir call indefinite strike from today

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Dec 7: The deadlock at the Shahjalal University of Science & Technology continued for the fourth day today.

The Varsity authorities are yet to take any step to unlock the main gate, Library and other building.

These were put under lock and key by the activists of the All-Party (Opposition) Action Committee on December 4 as part of its agitation programme to press for withdrawal of the names of different halls and buildings of the university.

The Students Action Committee, a combine of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and Islami Chhatra Shibir has called for an indefinite strike at the university from tomorrow.

The semester final examinations which were scheduled to begin from December 5 could not be held due to the siege to the varsity by the All-Party Action Committee on December 4 and 5.

A meeting was held at the varsity syndicate hall with the VC Professor Mohammad Habibur Rahman in the chair today. Treasurer, Registrar, Deans and heads of department, Proctors, Proctor and teachers representatives to the Syndicate attended the meeting.

The meeting strongly condemned the activities by some so-called 'organisations'. The speakers also expressed their concern over suspension of the academic activities as well as the admission process in the prevailing situation.

When the meeting was on, about 50 to 60 outsiders riding 22 motorbikes entered the campus and fired some gunshots.

The meeting also called upon the leading people of the town to help end the crisis, said a press release issued signed by the Registrar, tonight.

The authorities extended the date for submitting the admission forms up to December 22.

District unit of Muktiyoddha Sangsad as part of its week long programme, held a meeting in Rikabibazar area tonight with Abdul Khaliq in the chair.

The speakers said that the activities of the anti-liberation forces would not be tolerated. They also condemned the silent role played by the administration regarding the incidents at the university.

5 killed as train hits Mishuk in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Dec 7: Five persons travelling in a mishuk were crushed under the wheels of an intercity train in Dhopatila area between Manu and Shamsheernagar railway stations on Sylhet-Akhaura section this afternoon.

The incident occurred when the Chittagong-bound Paharika Express hit the mishuk on a rail crossing at around 5-3 pm.

The dead are, Hafiz Abbas Uddin, 40, Imam of Pirerbarz Jame Mosque of Kulaura thana, his elder brother Moulana Farid Uddin, 50, Abdul Mukhtar, 20, driver of the Mishuk.

The mishuk (Moulvibazar 02-0134) was damaged.

Khaleda to visit KSA, Mannan China this month

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and two other top leaders of the party will go abroad this month, party sources said.

Khaleda Zia will leave Dhaka for Riyadh on December 28 at the invitation of Saudi King to perform Umrah.

A close aide of the BNP chief said that she might also go for a post-operative check up at the King Faysal Specialised Hospital. Earlier, the Leader of the Opposition was operated upon there for arthritis.

She is expected to return home two days before the holy Eid-ul-Fitr.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, along with three other senior party leaders, will leave here for China on December 12 on a week's visit at the invitation of the Communist Party of China.

Other members of the delegation are: Vice Chairman Tariqul Islam, joint secretary general Ashraf Ali and member of the Chairperson's Advisory Committee M M Rezaul Karim.

They are expected to return to Dhaka on December 20.

City BNP convenor Sadek Hossain Khoka, MP will leave Dhaka for Sweden tonight for treatment of bullet injuries sustained in police action in the city during a hartal at Jatrabari area on November 8. During his fortnight long visit he will go to Sweden for treatment. After that Khoka is expected to visit UK before returning home.

Export, import at Benapole stalled

BENAPOLE (Jessore), Dec 7: West Bengal Transport Owners Association (WBTOA) and Transport Samik Union (TSU) reportedly stopped export-import trade between India and Bangladesh today for an indefinite period demanding unconditional release of four Indian trucks, reports BSS.

The Customs Department of Benapole check-post seized the four trucks on August 1 this year with illegal cigarette papers worth Taka 2.50 crore.

When contacted Benapole Customs authorities told BSS that the trucks loaded with cigarette papers entered Bangladesh on the day.

The Customs authorities seized the trucks and imposed a fine of Taka 50,000 on each truck. We have no other option but to follow the law of the land. The Indian authorities can take their trucks back after depositing the said fine with the Bangladesh authorities," Customs official said.

20 hurt as rival Sarbaharamen clash in Barisal

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Dec 7: At least 20 people were injured in a clash between two rival factions of Sarbahara Party at Thakurmallick village under Babuganj thana of the district yesterday evening.

According to police and local people, two rival groups of Sarbahara Party — one led by Kamrul Islam Himu and the other by Swapan Sarker — clashed over control of the area.

The feuding groups fired over 100 rounds of shots and exploded crackers during the clash that continued for two hours.

Additional police force was sent to the spot last night.

FAO DG due in city tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

Dr Jacques Diouf, Director-General, Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), will be here on December 9 on a two-day official visit to bestow the "Ceres Medal" upon Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The prime minister was awarded the FAO medal in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the promotion of food security and the struggle to eradicate hunger and malnutrition.

During his visit, the director-general will call on President Shahabuddin Ahmed, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad and Food and Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury.

The Ministry of Agriculture is coordinating the visit.

Zia Killing Case

Submission of probe report may be delayed

CHITTAGONG, Dec 7: Submission of investigation report in the Zia Murder Case is likely to be delayed by another three months as its Investigation Officer prayed for time today, reports UNB.

CID ASP Abdul Kader Khan submitted the prayer for time to the CMM's Court five days before the deadline of December 12 to submit the report.

CID sources said although a progress has been made in the investigation, further time was needed to complete the interrogation of 8 people, including some BNP leaders, injured during killing of the former President Ziaur Rahman at the local circuit House on May 23, 1981.

53 Nalitabari AL activists sent to jail hajjat

SHERPUR, Dec 7: A court here today rejected bail prayers of 53 activists of Nalitabari thana Awami League and its front organisations and sent them to jail hajjat, reports UNB. They surrendered to the Court of Magistrate Hasanul Islam in six cases including assaulting police, ransacking pourasava office and damaging houses of opponents apparently to protest killing of two local BCL leaders.

Police said president and secretary of Nalitabari thana Chhatra League were killed following intra-party conflicts on October 26 and 27. In protest, their supporters went on the rampage ransacking pourasava office and some houses. They also assaulted police on October 28.

Deadlock prevails at head office of health directorate

By Staff Correspondent

A near deadlock situation is prevailing at the head office of Health Directorate in the city for about a week now due to a stand-off between the employees association and a head clerk in the administrative section, sources said.

The local unit of the Sarkari Karmachari Sammanoy Parishad, an association of class three and four employees, at a meeting on November 28 declared head clerk Md Anwarul Islam persona non grata and demanded his transfer along with his associates for their alleged anti-staff and non-professional activities.

The head clerk is supported by a vested quarter, the sources alleged.

The Parishad also held a demonstration on the office premises and handed over a memorandum to the Director General of the Health Directorate to press its demand.

It was alleged that Islam ignored professional duties but got some employees transferred and created confusion among the staff, using his political influence and links with high-ups in the administration.

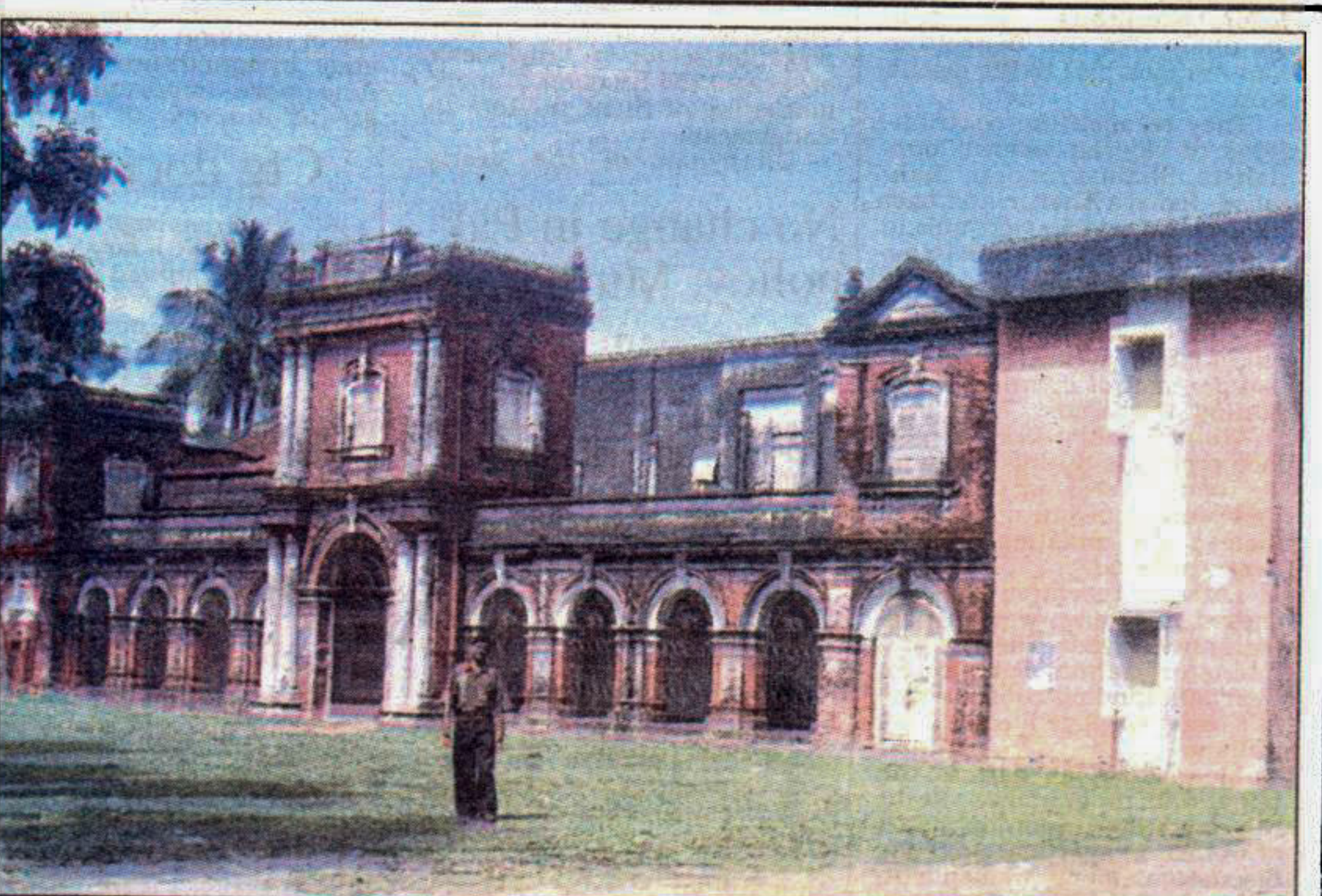
He also allegedly threatened some staff members with transfer and harassed some others. Sincere staff members can not do their professional duties because of the head clerk's 'immoral activities', the sources alleged.

A vested quarter is supporting the group led by Islam in a bid to destroy the image of the Parishad, they claimed.

Meanwhile, a meeting between officials and Parishad leaders has been scheduled for December 10 to end the deadlock situation, they said.

JU employees to go on indefinite strike today

SAVAR, Dec 7: Officers and employees of the Jahangirnagar University will begin an indefinite strike today to press for allowing some students of the University School and College, who were disqualified in the test, to appear in the next SSC examination, reports UNB. The JU employees union, employees association and officers' association have jointly called the strike.



A withering landmark

From Mozammel Haque

RANGPUR, Dec 7: Once a prominent centre of cultural activities, the Rangpur Town Hall has lost much of its glory and glamour, owing to lack of necessary renovation.

Built in 1891 on three acres of land, the sprawling structure has gone through a lot of changes. But during or renovation of the hall due to dearth of necessary funds, the last time it was renovated was in 1980 when Shilpakala Academy took up a scheme to enhance its capacity to 750 seats from 300. The greenroom, the automatic power driven screen and the sound system were also developed.

That was all. The wooden frames of the stage and the screen have been damaged severely. The walls are damp and the roof has given in to rain water.

The secretary of the management committee of the town hall says at least Tk one crore is needed to modernise the century-old hall, urging the relevant authorities to come up immediately with financial help to save the town hall.