

Sirajganj-7 Low turnout, irregularities & violence

By Nazmul Ashraf back
from Sirajganj

Low turnout of voters, irregularities and stray incidents of violence marked yesterday's by-election in the Sirajganj-7 constituency of the Jatiya Sangsad.

Apprehension of violence, threats by rival candidates and people's indifference and preoccupation with farming and other day-to-day activities were identified as the main reasons for the low turnout.

Police detained some persons on charge of casting false votes and seized dozens of motorbikes for plying in the election area defying a ban.

Polling was peaceful and uninterrupted in all but one centres. Turnout of voters in most of the 62 centres was low. The centres were heavily guarded by

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Triple murder: 3 placed on fresh remand

By Court Correspondent

Three people arrested in connection with the triple murder case were taken on a three-day fresh police remand yesterday.

The three, identified as Safiqul Alam, Ahmed Hossain and Abdus Satter were arrested on November 24, for their alleged involvement in the killing of Sajedunnessa, her son Swapan and daughter Sabiha Begum at Azimpur under Lalbagh thana on November 21.

The accused were produced before the CMM's court yesterday with a prayer for seven-day remand. The court granted for three days.

A total of five people were arrested by Lalbagh police for their alleged involvement in the killing.

Two of them — Sufia Begum, sister of the victim Sajedunnessa and Obaidul Akber, son of Sufia Begum — were sent to the Dhaka Central Jail after a court order. Obaidul Akber gave a confession statement before the CMM's court on November 25. Akber confessed that he along with his five accomplices killed the three to grab a piece of land.

Blocks 15, 16 & Sangu Petrobangla okays transfer of operatorship

Petrobangla has approved the transfer of operatorship of gas blocks 15 and 16 and offshore Sangu gasfield from Cairn Energy to Shell Bangladesh, reports UNB.

Cairn Energy PLC has received a formal notification from Petrobangla in this regard, said a press release of Shell Bangladesh yesterday.

Shell Bangladesh Exploration and Development BV will now operate and conduct all exploration, development and production activities in Blocks 15 and 16, including the Sangu gasfield.

With its additional resources and technological capabilities, Shell will operate the increasing size and complexity of the Shell/Cairn joint venture and the development of its long-term plans in Bangladesh.

Completion of the transfer has not affected Shell and Cairn's interest holdings and they remain aligned on a 50/50 basis. In the specific area of the Sangu development, HBR Energy Inc. is also a partner.

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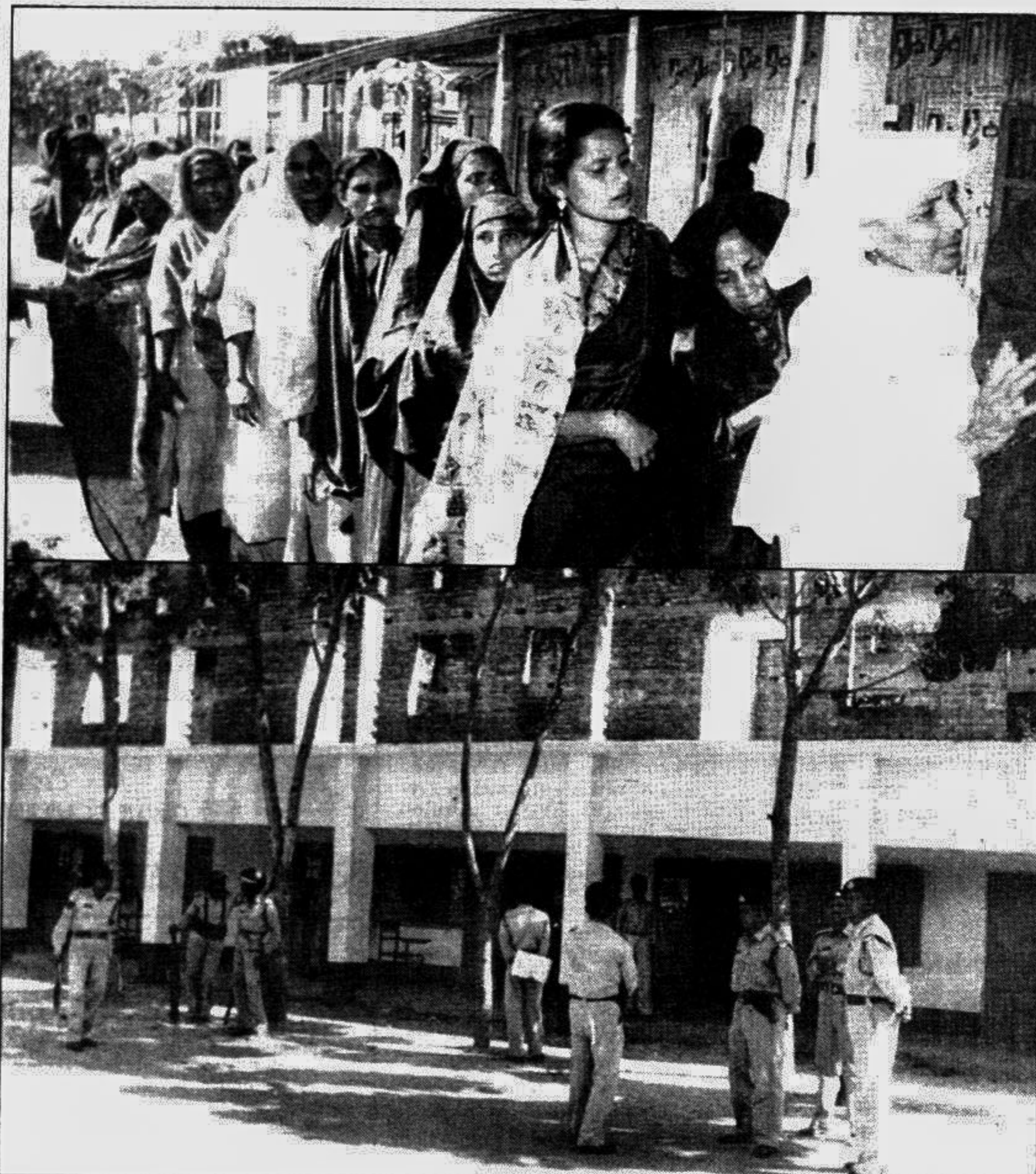
December 9

	Azan	Jamaat
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

By-polls held without opposition presence Both Alauddins win but Swapan gets the shock

Star Report



Low Turnout

Voters in a queue at Bangabandhu Women's College Centre at Shahjapur (top) and Shahjapur Ibrahim Pilot High School Centre at around noon yesterday. — Star photo

Ruling party candidate and former deputy minister Hasibur Rahman Swapan suffered a shock defeat at the hands of an expelled party leader in one of the three bypolls held yesterday.

Swapan lost his Sirajganj-7 seat to Chayan Islam, the rebel Awami League man who lost his position as the party's Shahjapur thana president for disregarding the party decision nominating the former.

Chayan drew 55,907 votes while Swapan could manage only 33,992. The EC said 51 per cent cast their votes.

In two other seats, where voting marked a lower turnout, the ruling party nominees won. Less than a fourth of the voters registered in the Rajshahi seat polling.

Major opposition parties boycotted the polls questioning the Election Commission's neutrality and demanding resignation of the government and the CEC.

In Kishoreganj-1, Professor Alauddin Ahmed beat another renegade Fazlur Rahman. The professor who quit as vice chancellor of Jahangirnagar University to vie for the seat polled 58,865 votes. Fazlur Rahman got 28,875. The turnout of voters was about 44 per cent.

In Rajshahi-5, former state minister Alauddin had an easy sail to retain his seat when only 22.6 per cent took an interest in the voting.

The Awami League-turned-BNP-turned-Awami League man beat his nearest independent rival Abdur Razzaq who polled only 1,560 votes. Alauddin got 39,226.

Ershad-led JP's Abdul Gafur Shah who had withdrawn from the race three days to the polls bagged 1496 votes. Shah protested.

Both Swapan and Alauddin (Rajshahi-5) lost their seats for
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Home ministry plans crackdown on illegal immigrants

By Staff Correspondent

Foreigners who want to extend their visas will face tougher scrutiny under a home ministry plan designed to slash the number of illegal visitors.

The ministry ordered immigration officials to crack down on foreigners after it received intelligence reports that indicated there are many who stay in Bangladesh without valid visas, work without permits or become involved in "anti-state" activities.

A source said police suspect foreign involvement in a spate of recent bombings and the recovery of high powered explosives in the city, although he declined to give more information about these cases.

"Immigration authorities are raising objections when people without valid visas try to extend their stay in the country," said a top ranking official.

A source said a "few hundred" foreign nationals, mainly Indians, Sri Lankans and Filipinos, work in various NGOs and private companies without valid work permits.

Immigration officials will now verify each application before granting a visa extension. The cases of "genuine" foreigners will always be considered, said the source.

Indeed, visa extensions could generate substantial revenue for the ministry after the necessary formalities, he said.

When asked if foreign nationals were being harassed in the name of verification of the

genuine ones, the source avoided a direct reply. He said nothing of that sort had been reported, yet.

Illegal foreigners applying for extensions aren't arrested, but are advised to leave the country immediately.

Immigration officials refused to say how many illegal foreigners have been asked so far to leave the country.

FAO DG hands over Ceres Medal to PM today

Prime Minister Sheikh

Hasina will be awarded the prestigious "Ceres Medal" of FAO today for her outstanding contribution to promotion of food security and struggle for eradicating hunger and malnutrition, reports UNB.

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Director General Dr Jacques Diouf will hand over the FAO medal to Sheikh Hasina at a function at Prime Minister's office this afternoon, officials said.

Dr Diouf is arriving here today on a two-day official visit. Earlier she had won UNESCO Peace Award for her contribution to peace and human rights through striking the peace deal for ending tribal insurgency in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Police, terrorists exchange fire: Rickshawpuller killed in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Dec 8: A rickshawpuller was shot dead during a clash between police and a group of terrorists in Golpaha area in the city last night.

Police said the victim Md Babul, 35, received bullet wounds at 11 pm when the terrorists opened fire on patrol police.

The terrorists also hurled cocktails at the police team, police retaliated with shots that resulted in injuries of two terrorists, police said.

The injured terrorists were caught and later taken to Medical College Hospital by police.

Police sources said a group of armed terrorists attempted to loot a bank branch near Golpaha area last night. When police chased the terrorists, they opened fire on police from a microbus, sources added.

Lankans win Test series

HARARE, Dec 8: Sri Lanka won the Test series here 1-0 against Zimbabwe when the last of the three matches fizzled out into a draw thanks to a stubborn 70 not out from home captain Andy Flower, who ended with a series average of over 97, reports AFP.

The visitors, who were 36-1 when the match was called off, took the second Test in Harare and drew the first in Bulawayo.

With a day-and-a-half of the five days lost through bad weather, there was not enough time for either side to snatch victory.

Rayer Bazar memorial to be opened on Martyred Intellectuals' Day

By Morshe Ali Khan

Construction of the Martyred Intellectuals' Memorial at Rayer Bazar in the city will be completed before December 14, the Martyred Intellectuals Day, contractors and designers of the project said yesterday.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina would open the Memorial on December 14, an official announcement said.

Works Minister Engr Mosharraf Hossain along with other officials visited the site yesterday.

On December 14, 1971, the Pakistani occupation forces and their collaborators, sensing defeat to advancing freedom fighters, systematically

rounded up Bangalee intellectuals and killed them. Their bodies were found at Rayer Bazar when the country was liberated on December 16. The killers have so far remained unpunished.

The authorities are now constructing a 8-km road on the Dhaka City Flood Protection Embankment from Mohammadpur to Killaroad in Lalbagh. The road will pass by the Memorial.

Two natural canals — Haikar Khal and Rayer Bazar Khal — flow through the vast low-lying area on the western side of the Memorial. Both the canals are connected with Buriganga river in the west but

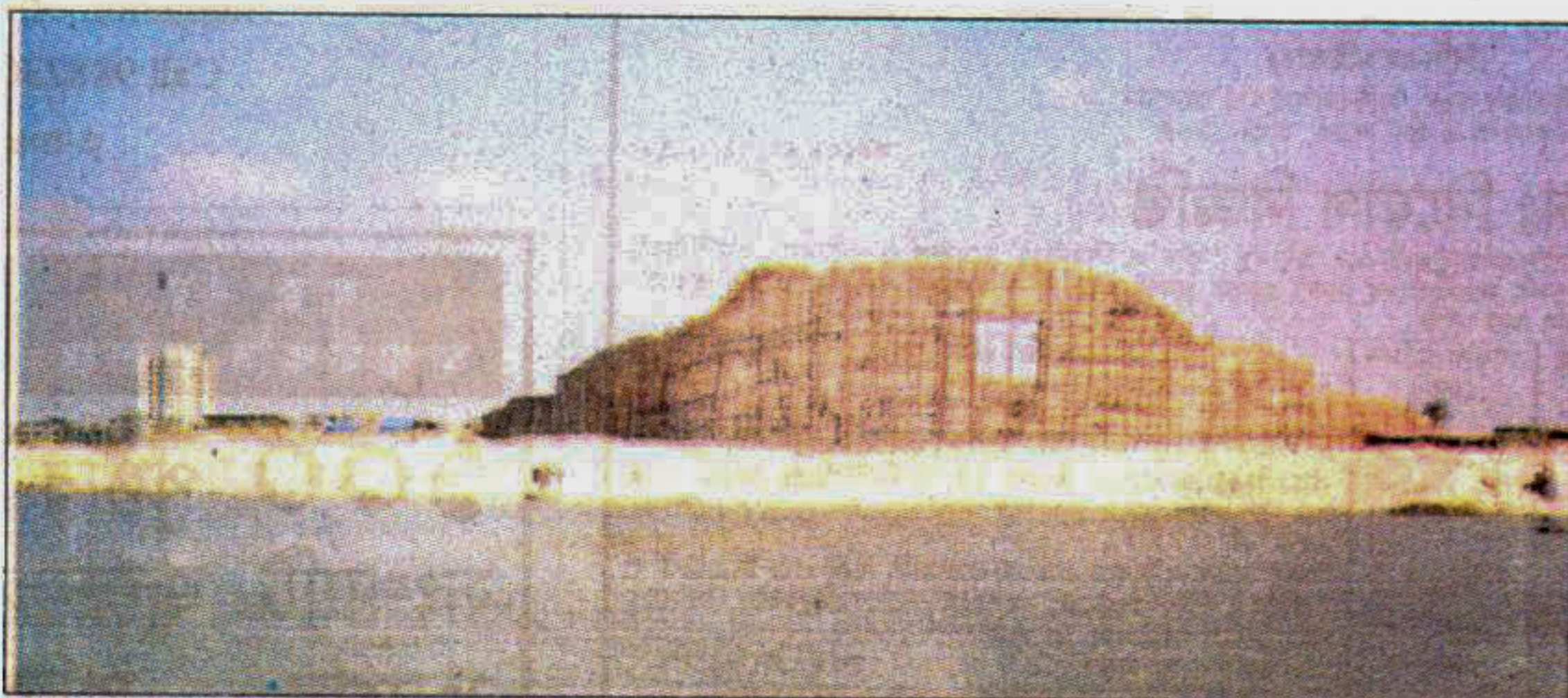
Haikar Khal flows up to the Turag river in the northwest.

Designers of the Memorial, town planners and architects have strongly recommended to the government that the entire area be preserved in its natural condition to retain the scenic beauty.

The government has so far acquired 100 feet area around the monument and is planning to plant trees.

Architects Farid Uddin Ahmed and Md Jami-al-Safi, consultants of the construction and designer firms said a proposal for creating a green belt and building a museum, an archive and an amphitheater

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The under-construction memorial for martyred intellectuals at Rayerbazar in the city. —Star photo

Tk 212.50 cr UK grant for rural hygiene, sanitation

Bangladesh will receive 29.60 million pounds, equivalent to Tk 212.50 crore, as grant from the United Kingdom under an agreement signed in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

The amount would be utilised for the 'UNICEF-Bangladesh Rural Hygiene, Sanitation and Water Supply Project', said a press release.

The purpose of the project is to improve hygienic practice and behaviour especially for the poor on a sustainable basis, contributing to reducing mortality, morbidity and malnutrition caused by diarrhoea and other water borne diseases.

Joint Secretary of the Economic Relations Division M Abdur Razzaque and Head of the DFID-Bangladesh Kevin Sparkhall signed the agreement.

Ramadan begins tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

The holy month of Ramadan begins tomorrow (December 10), said a press release of the Islamic Foundation.

The decision in this regard was taken at a meeting of the National Moon Sighting Committee yesterday as the moon was not sighted. State Minister for Religious Affairs Moulana Md Nurul Islam presided the meeting.

The meeting also said that the Holy Shab-e-Qadr would be observed on January 4.

Among others present in the meeting were Religious Affairs Ministry Secretary Md Mahfuz Sobhan and Islamic Foundation Director General Moulana Abdul Awal.

Reuter adds: The holy month of Ramadan begins in Saudi Arabia today, the country's top religious council said yesterday.

Other Gulf Arab states, including the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman and Kuwait, made similar announcements.

4 parties reject CCC election schedule

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance has rejected the Chittagong City Corporation polls schedule and demanded its immediate cancellation.

"We will do everything necessary to resist the CCC polls," BNP Vice-chairman M Shamsul Islam told newsmen yesterday after presiding over a meeting of the Liaison Committee of the four-party alliance that reviewed the schedule announced by the Election Commission on Tuesday.

The alliance components will observe 'demonstration day' in all divisional and district headquarters today to protest declaration of the polls schedule, according to a decision of the meeting, held at the official residence of the Leader of the Opposition in parliament

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Canada refuses to extradite alleged killer of Bangabandhu

TORONTO, Dec 8: Canada

has refused to extradite a former senior military officer allegedly involved in the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding father of Bangladesh, saying it has no extradition treaty with Dhaka, reports IANS.

Bangladesh has issued an international warrant against the officer, Nur Chowdhury. But the Canadian government refused to extradite the officer, who reportedly claimed refugee status in Canada, as the country has no extradition treaty with Bangladesh.

A spokesman for Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs Sean Rowan said, "We don't have an extradition treaty with

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Brigadier commits suicide?

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, December 8: Brigadier Shabbab Ashfaq, Commander of 69 Infantry Brigade based in Bandarban, was found dead at Chittagong Cantonment Officers' Mess at 4pm today.

Military intelligence sources claimed that he committed suicide. Other sources said that he died in an accident during a joint exercise being held at the Cantonment.

No official details were available about the death. As rumours spread, phone calls to and from the Cantonment were barred, sources said.

Sharif faces series of charges: Hearing delayed till Monday



Nawaz Sharif

KARACHI, Dec 8: Prosecution lawyers today submitted a lengthy charge sheet against deposed premier Nawaz Sharif accusing him of treason, kidnapping, attempted hijacking, attempted murder, criminal conspiracy and abetment, reports AP.

Sharif did not enter a plea and Justice Shahid Ahmed adjourned the hearing until Monday, when it is expected formal charges would be filed.

The charge sheet was presented to the anti-terrorist court, which will eventually hear the case against the ex-prime minister.

On Monday Sharif and his co-accused, including his younger brother, Shahbaz, are expected to enter a plea.

The charges carry varying penalties from the death penalty to life in prison to lesser prison terms.

The charges stem from an incident on Oct 12, the same day of the coup, in which a passenger aircraft returning Army Chief Gen Pervez Musharraf to Pakistan was denied permission to land in Karachi.

The plane was eventually allowed to land — with just seven minutes of fuel to spare — after army soldiers took over the Karachi Airport control tower, removed two fire engines blocking the runway and switched on the runway lights.

The judge ordered the prosecution to hand over documents, including the transcripts of witnesses, to Sharif's defense

lawyers to allow them to prepare a case. Also the judge ordered all video and audio cassettes from the Air Traffic Control tower and the prime minister's residence given to Sharif's lawyers along with the black box voice recorder from the aircraft.

The Urdu-language charge sheet that was presented to the court accused the former prime minister of "endangering the lives of Gen Musharraf and others." It also said that the accused "wanted the aircraft to crash after running out of fuel."

Sharif has steadfastly denied the charges and accused the army of hijacking democracy and Pakistan's constitution.

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কুশল হাপা শুরু হচ্ছে আগামীকাল থেকে প্রথম আলোর পৃষ্ঠা-৯

প্রথম আলো - Standard & Chartered

কুইজ - শুধুমাত্র ব্যাংকদের জন্য

আকর্ষণীয় পুরস্কার

বাংলাদেশী সকল ব্যাংকের কর্মকর্তা-কর্মচারীর জন্য উন্মুক্ত সহজ প্রশ্ন। সহজ উত্তর। সহজে পাবেন পুরস্কার।

কুইজ প্রতিযোগিতায় অংশ নিয়ে জিতে নিন

- ঢাকা-কাঠমাণ্ডু-ঢাকা
- ঢাকা-কলকাতা-ঢাকা
- ঢাকা-কলকাতা-ঢাকা

প্রতিটি ক্ষেত্রে দুজনের জন্য বিমান টিকেট এবং আরো ২৫টি পুরস্কার।

প্রথম আলো

একুশ শতকের দৈনিক