

What's on today....

Discussion meeting: Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) will jointly hold a discussion meeting to mark "Martyred Intellectuals Day." Venue: Jatiya Press Club. Time: 11:00 am.

Discussion meeting: Bangla Academy will hold a discussion meeting on "Martyred Intellectuals Day and Today's Bangladesh". Venue: Seminar room of academy. Time: 11:00 am.

Publication ceremony: The publication ceremony of Dr Naim Ahmed's book 'Public Interest Litigation: Constitutional Issues and Remedies' will be held. Organiser: Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST). Venue: CIRDAP auditorium, Chamely House, 17, Tophkhana Road. Time: 4 pm.

Film show: *Muktir Katha*, a documentary by Tareque Masud and Catherine Masud will be screened. Venue: Shishu Academy premises. Time: 6:00 pm.

ISL presentation: Information Solution Ltd has organised a presentation on 6 New Technologies for the New Millennium. An Iftar party will follow the presentation. Venue: IDB Bhaban premises, Agargaon. Time: 3 pm.

Exhibition: A 3-day exhibition of the Situation Report and other documents of Sector II of the Liberation War opens. Venue: Institute of Fine Arts, Dhaka University. Time: 3:30 pm.

..... and tomorrow

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Weather

Dry weather likely

Weather is likely to remain dry over the country during next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

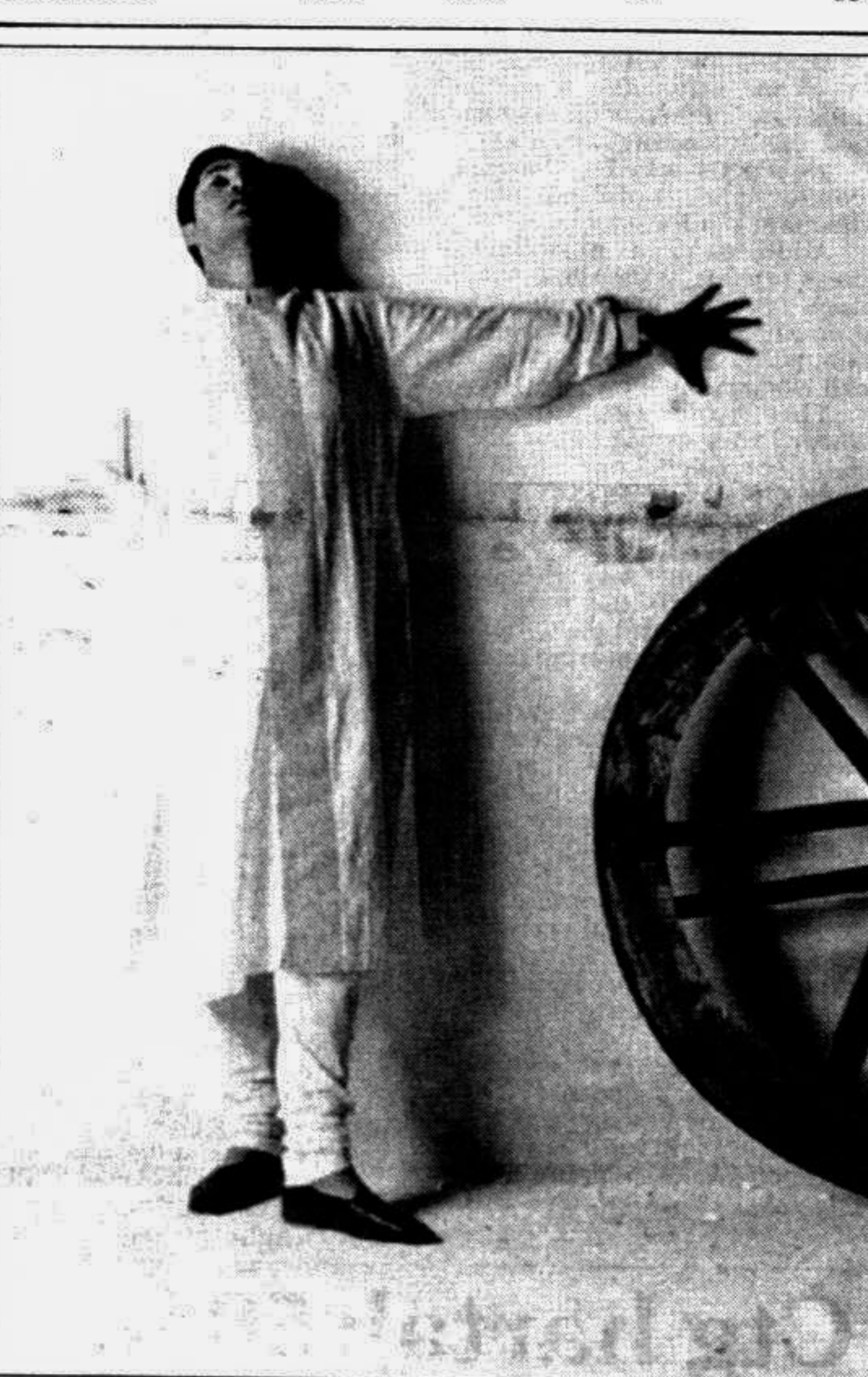
Slight fall in night temperature is expected over the country during the period. Met Office said.

The country's highest temperature 30.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Teknaf and the lowest 13.4 degrees at Satkhira.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:14 pm and rises on Wednesday at 6:32 am.

Maximum and minimum temperatures and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius	Humidity in percentage
	Max	Min
Dhaka	27.5	18.3
Chittagong	28.8	18.6
Rajshahi	28.3	13.9
Khulna	29.3	16.2
Barisal	28.8	15.0
Sylhet	29.4	17.2
Cox's Bazar	29.0	20.0



Andes's Millennium Fashion Collection exhibition by designer Anila Haque begins tomorrow at Andes Boutique at Gulshan. The above picture shows one of her creations from the collection.

Mahila Parishad slams Gen Niazi's remarks

By Staff Correspondent
Bangladesh Mohila Parishad in a statement condemned the remarks made by Pakistani general Niazi in an interview with Pak news agency PFI that Pakistani Occupation forces did not rape Bangladeshi women during the country's War of Independence.

Ayesha Khanom, general secretary of the Parishad said Gen Niazi's remark was not an isolated event and there is a correlation between the recent movement of anti-liberation axis and the remarks.

She said the fundamentalists have been engaged in conspiracy by sending death threats to the country's leading intellectuals and they have dared to attack the procession of Mohila Parishad.

She said those anti-liberation forces are still active who had tortured women, killed innocent people and helped the Pak occupation army in killing intellectuals of the country.

"They are now active to eliminate the spirit of the Liberation War and jeopardise the practice of democracy in the country," she said.

She expressed her surprise and alleged that they have joined their hand with the main opposition party in the name of restoration of democracy.

The Mohila Parishad urged to make it a reality to try the killers and collaborators of 71 and called upon all to come forward to resist and eliminate those evil forces.

Policeman killed in road accident in Mymensingh

MYMENSINGH, Dec 13: A cop was run over by a speeding night coach at Majibagh in Nandail thana on Kishoreganj-Mymensingh road this (Monday) morning, reports UNB.

The victim was identified as Abdus Sattar, 40 sub-inspector of Nandail police station. Sattar on his way to Nandail from Kishoreganj on board a motorcycle met the tragic end of his life when the night coach coming from opposite direction rammed into his bike at 6 am.

Police seized the vehicle but the driver managed to escape.

Mokammel to attend meeting in Bangkok

Mokammel Haque, executive director of Board of Investment (BOI) left yesterday for Bangkok to attend the roundtable meeting on Foreign Direct Investment and Sustainable Human Development in Asia: Past Experience & Future Prospects, reports UNB.

FIAS and UNDP jointly organised the roundtable to be held on December 13-14 aiming to share experience of relevant policies and practices that can influence flows of desirable FDI and help to realize its potential socio-economic benefits for Asian countries.

Narsingdi Mukto Dibash observed

NARSINGDI, Dec 13: Narsingdi Mukto Dibash (liberation day) was observed here yesterday amidst jubilation, reports BSS.

After a nine-month long Liberation War against Pakistani occupation forces and their local collaborators — Razakars and Al-Badr, hundreds of freedom fighters entered Narsingdi town on December 12 in 1971 and liberated the then thana headquarters from Pakistan Army.

Bangladesh Muktiyoddah Sangsad, Narsingdi District Unit Command, organised a discussion meeting, rally, *milad mahfil* and special prayers at its office to mark the day.

Commander of Muktiyoddah Sangsad, Narsingdi District Command Abdul Motaleb Pathan, hoisted the national and organisational flag in front of the command office to mark the liberation day celebrations. Earlier, a colourful rally, participated by the people from all walks of life, paraded main streets of the town.

'EU defence move unsatisfactory'

ANKARA, Dec 13: Turkey today described as unsatisfactory a European Union initiative to set up a rapid reaction force because it will exclude non-EU members from the decision-making mechanism, but use their resources, reports AFP.

The prevalent EU understanding on the participation of European NATO members that are not EU members, like Turkey, to the initiative is far from satisfactory, the foreign ministry said in a statement.

On Friday at the EU's Helsinki summit, European leaders agreed to create a force of 50,000 troops to intervene in European conflicts, without relying on NATO and to be in place by 2003.

Turkey has previously voiced objections to the European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI), on the grounds that it would be forced to contribute to the initiative on missions it cannot decide upon.

"Our belief is that Turkey, which has made important contributions to European security and defence through its NATO membership since 1952, will be allowed to have its rightful place in the new structure," the Turkish statement said.

At the Helsinki summit, Turkey was selected candidate status for EU membership, but is not expected to join the European club for many years.



Policemen take away the body of an Indian police personnel who was shot dead by suspected Muslim militants at point blank in Srinagar yesterday. Seven other policemen were killed when the militants struck at four places within a span of 30 minutes in the Kashmir capital's main commercial centre. —AFP photo

Serial attacks in Srinagar: 7 policemen killed

SRINAGAR, India, Dec 13: At least seven Indian policemen died and 18 people were injured today when suspected Muslim separatists attacked the main commercial centre of the Kashmir summer capital Srinagar, police said, reports AFP.

The militants struck at four places within a span of 30 minutes. In the first attack at Madina Chowk they shot and injured two policemen and within minutes they opened fire at another policeman, injuring him.

When a police patrol came to the rescue, the militants threw a grenade killing six policemen and injuring 15 others, including a civilian.

As paramilitaries rushed to the aid of the police, the militants shot dead a policeman in Koker Bazar, near Lal Chowk, the spokesman said.

The separatists have stepped up attacks on Indian troops and policemen in the last two months.

Earlier this month two Muslim militants and an Indian army officer were killed when armed rebels staged a commando raid on a fortified military camp in northern Kashmir.

On November 4, two guerrillas stormed the previously impregnable Corps headquarters in Srinagar and shot dead the Indian army's chief spokesman and four of his staff.

Muslim separatist violence in Kashmir has claimed more than 25,000 lives since 1989. India accuses Pakistan of arming and training the guerrillas. Islamabad denies the accusations but extends moral and diplomatic support to the armed struggle in the Indian zone of disputed Kashmir.

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Croatian honour guards escort the coffin of Croatian President Franjo Tudjman yesterday during the funeral at Mirogoj Cemetery in Zagreb. Tudjman died on December 10 after a long battle with cancer. —AFP photo

6 ministers resign to force Romanian PM's ouster

BUCHAREST, Dec 13: Six members of the Romanian cabinet Monday handed in their resignations in a bid to force the ouster of Prime Minister Radu Vasile, according to a government source, reports AFP.

Vasile had been expected to tender his resignation Monday under pressure from his Christian Democrat party and amid criticism of his government's slow pace of reforms.

The government source named the ministers who had resigned as Interior Minister Constantin Dudu Ionescu, Agriculture Minister Ioan Muresan, Environment Minister Romica Tomescu, Public Works Minister Constantin Noica and European Integration Minister Alexandru Herlea.

Secretary of State for Regional Administration Ioan Rosca told journalists he had handed in his resignation.

Small accident in Europe's biggest N-plant

KIEV, Dec 13: A reactor at Europe's biggest nuclear plant, situated in southern Ukraine, has been temporarily shut down after an incident in its cooling system, a plant spokesman said today, reports AFP.

The incident, at the Zaporizhka nuclear power plant, occurred Sunday, at 6:31 a.m. (10:31 am BST), said spokesman Oleg Ocheke. He added that the accident had not led to any rise in radioactivity levels.

The reactor is set to start up again Wednesday, he added. Two other reactors are also being repaired at the moment, the spokesman said. Both are scheduled to be back in action in January.

Belfast, Dublin begin new era of cooperation

ARMAGH, Northern Ireland, Dec 13: Ministers from Dublin and Belfast met today to launch a new era of cross-border cooperation in another step to the full implementation of Northern Ireland's peace accord, reports AFP.

The entire Irish cabinet, including Prime Minister Bertie Ahern, travelled north to the ancient city of Armagh to meet their counterparts from Belfast's newly-formed power-sharing executive under First Minister David Trimble.

"We look forward to a new era of cooperation and working together based on mutual recognition and respect," Trimble told reporters just before the first session of the cross-border North-South Ministerial Council.

Ahern said: "We are here to do our utmost to make life better for everyone on this island. We're here in an absolute sense of friendship."

The North-South Ministerial Council was created by the historic April 1998 Good Friday peace agreement, which set up a new framework for power-sharing in Northern Ireland between Protestants, who want continued British rule over the province, and Roman Catholics who want to unite with Ireland.

It also envisaged an unprecedented level of cooperation between ministers from Belfast and Dublin, much to the fury of Protestant hardliners.

Indeed, the only two ministers not at Monday's meeting were the Democratic Unionist Party's Peter Robinson and Nigel Dodds.

Victory festival begins

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ems and presentation of different child and youth organisations will be staged.

At the Kazi Aref Ahmed Lokmela at the IFA cottage industry products will be put on display while puppet show will be held and merry-go-rounds will be set up.

Besides, photographs and documents on the war of liberation will be put on display at the Moshed Ali and Abdul Aziz (Bir Pratik) Prodarshani Kendra.

Other programmes will take place at different points like Arju Rahman Natyia Mancha at the southern side of the Dhaka University Central Library, Begum Sufia Kamal Abritty Mancha at the Bakulata in the IFA, Rokonzaman Khan Dada Bhai Mancha at the DU Library premises, Satiya Saha Chalcitra Prodarshani Kendra at the west gate of Suhrawardy Udyan, Sergeant

Ahmed Pathonattya Angan at the west gate of Suhrawardy Udyan and Goyan Tapash Abdur Razak Boimela at the Shoparjita Sadhinata premises on the TSC road island.

Meanwhile, a three-day cultural programme marking the Victory Day will begin today at Ramna Batamul in the city under the aegis of Joy Bangla Sangskritik Oikya Jote.

Sector 2 of the Liberation War has organised a two-day exhibition of rare documents on the war at Fine Arts Institute of Dhaka University.

The exhibition jointly organised with Sammilita Sangskritik Jote will begin today.

A three-day exhibition of books and posters on Liberation War began at Central Library of Jahangirnagar University yesterday. Acting Vice Chancellor of the varsity Prof Abdul Bayes formally opened the book show.

Bombs blast kills cop

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during the hartal that disrupted life in the country, our correspondents reported.

Police arrested 17 pickets in the city.

Constable Sudeb Shaha was injured at Kakrail crossing in the city when two cocktails went off when a small BNP procession was passing through the area, police and witnesses said. He was taken to police hospital.

Another policeman was injured when at least four handbombs were hurled at police at a truck stand at Nurjahan Road in Mohammadpur at 11:30am, witnesses said. The name of the policeman could not be known.

Activists of ruling Awami League and opposition Jamaat-e-Islami clashed in the city's Paltan and Baitul Mukarram areas in the morning, leaving over a dozen people injured.

Witnesses said the trouble erupted as two bombs were exploded at Paltan crossing when a big Awami League procession led by State Minister for Shipping Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya was going to Baitul Mukarram area from near the Jatiya Press Club at about 10:40 am.

At that time, a Jamaat procession was going back towards Dainik Bangla crossing from Baitul Mukarram.

Defying a police barricade, the AL processionists chased the Jamaat procession from the rear at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram mosque.

There was exchange of brickbats for some time but Jamaat activists, who were less in number, fled through different lanes and by lanes. Some of them took shelter at the party's city unit nearby, witnesses said.

Over a dozen of bombs were exploded during the clash.

A team of policemen led by Motiul Hossain OC Mohammad Hanif stood there as spectators. They moved inside a lane to remain safe.

Bus and police team, deployed at Dainik Bangla crossing, moved towards Baitul Mukarram, fired several tear shells and brought the situation under control, witnesses said.

Some shops of warm clothes and other items on footpaths there were ransacked and looted during the clash.

Some minibuses, BRTC buses and auto-rickshaws plied some specific city roads during the hartal. Inter-district buses kept off the roads, but trains and launches operated normally.

Transaction at Dhaka and Chittagong stock exchanges remained suspended due to absence of share traders.

Private offices, business establishments, educational institutions remained closed.

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Five persons were injured when a bomb was hurled on a minibus at Engineers' Institute road at about 10:35am. Injured Sirajuddin, Korshed Alam, Giasuddin, Shaheen and Sony were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Five more persons were injured when two bombs were thrown on a state-run double-decker BRTC bus near the "Matshaya Bhaban" at 11am. Injured Liton, Selim, Abdul Latif, Leunrdah and Korshed were admitted to the DMCH.

Young rickshawpuller Lutfar Rahman was injured in Kawran Bazar area at about 10:30am when some unidentified persons fired several shots. But the cause of the firing could not be known.

During the hartal, BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote brought out separate processions at Bijoynagar, Baitul Mukarram, Kakrail, Naya Paltan, Mouchak and Shahjahanpur areas. The parties also held separate rallies.

Police cashed a BNP procession near Kakrail crossing at 12:08pm. Two BNP activists were injured there.

BNP brought out processions from the party central office and paraded Kakrail, Bijoynagar and Nayapaltan areas. They also held rallies near the Kakrail crossing and in front of the party office.

BNP leaders and MPs Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Abdullah Al Noman, Shahjahan Siraj, Prof MA Mannan, Mirza Abbas, ZA Khan, Mahbubul Alam Tara, Fazlur Rahman Patal, Amanullah Khan, Abdus Salam, Dr Mohammad Ali, Nazimuddin Khan, Ehsanul Haq Milon and Ziauddin Ahmed Murad led processions and addressed the rallies.

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KUJ condemns attack

KHULNA, Dec 13: Khulna Union of Journalists (KUJ) has strongly condemned the attack on 17 journalists while they were performing their professional duty in Chittagong. The KUJ leaders demanded exemplary