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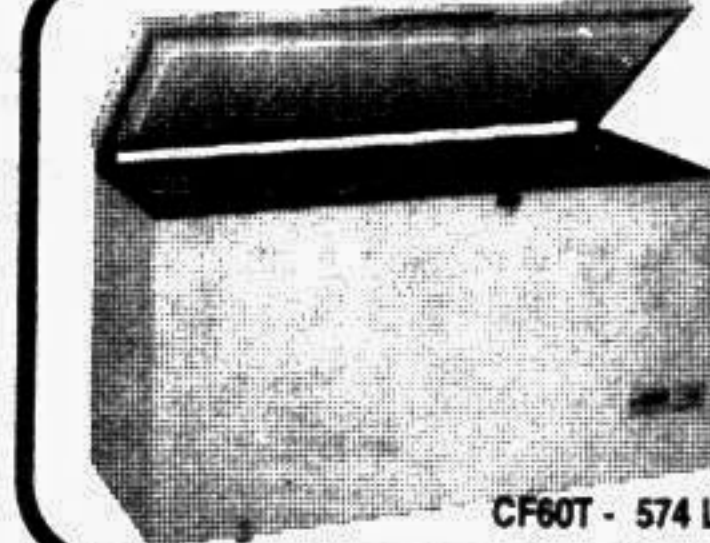
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25 opposition activists sent to jail

By Staff Correspondent

Twenty-five opposition activists arrested while protesting against the Dhaka University's decision to confer honorary Doctorate Degree on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina were sent to the Dhaka Central Jail yesterday.

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court Dhaka yesterday rejected their bail prayers when they were produced before the court but ordered jail authorities for their proper treatment.

Lawyers of the accused told the court that the activists were tortured by Motijheel police during their remand period.

Of the activists, 20 were taken on one-day remand while five remanded for two days.

Brickbats pelted at CCC office

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Dec 20: Brickbats were pelted at Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) office by some agitators while a funeral procession with the bodies of two Shibir activists was passing by it this afternoon, police and witnesses said.

The Shibir activists were killed in a clash at Chittagong University on Sunday.

Glasses of two vehicles parked on the CCC office premises were damaged during the attack at 3 pm, police said.

The processionists also damaged some vehicles and stoned at shops at Chawkbazar area at 4 pm, police and witnesses said.

But police dispersed the agitators immediately.

However, security was tightened in the city and its surrounding areas fearing fresh violence as a sequel to CU clash.

Dhaka Telecom employees clash in city: 3 hurt

By Staff Correspondent

At least three employees of Dhaka Telecom Region (North) were injured when supporters of rival employees unions clashed at its Sher-e-Bangla Nagar office yesterday over transfer of an employee.

Of the injured, Afabbuddin and Humayun Kabir Swapon were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Police said supporters of Awami League-backed TNT Federal Union and BNP-backed TNT Sramik Karmachari Union clashed over recent transfer of a clerk.

They chased each other and damaged office furniture. Tejaan police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control, police said.

Senior officials of BTB were not available for comment last night. When contacted, Khaleque Bhuiyan, PRO of BTB, could not confirm the incident.

JCD activists

From page 1

Earlier, addressing the rally, BNP central leader Moudud Ahmed said no government can stay in power through repressive measures. Repression and filing of false cases will rather intensify the on-going one point movement, he said.

"Our movement is not for power. It is for saving the country and democracy. The movement will continue till the autocrat and puppet government resigns and a fresh general election is announced."

He demanded immediate release of all JCD leaders and urged its activists to be prepared for a vigorous movement after the Ramadan.

BNP central leader Mirza Abbas urged law enforcers to be neutral while on duty. "You are servants of the government, not of a political party," he said addressing the rally.

Amanullah Aman MP said that the home minister was resorting to repression on opposition activists as per directives from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. "People will not spare them for their heinous acts."

Feni violence

leader and pourasava commissioner Ratan and Chhatra Dal activist Zakir were killed during gunfight.

Harun, Kalam and an unidentified young man were killed on Saturday.

Of the six killings, police so far registered only one case filed by Alamgir Hossain Tota, elder brother of BCL leader Ratan. Fourteen BNP men including district unit general secretary Prof Joyal Abedin, were accused of killing Ratan.

BNP sources said police refused to take a case for the killing of JCD activist Zakir in which 22 people, including ruling party MP Joyal Abedin, were named accused.

The Feni town remained tense fearing further violence at any time. Police reinforcements were sighted on the streets to avert possible trouble.

Meanwhile, the ruling Awami League staged a rally in the town today protesting the killing of BCL leader Ratan.

The alliance of 11 left-leaning parties also brought out an anti-terrorism procession in the town today. Central leaders of the alliance, Pankaj Bhat-tacharya, Morshed Ali and Saifuddin Khan, led the procession.

Roundtable on 'Bangladesh in the new millennium'

Civil society should come to aid of the under-privileged

By Staff Correspondent

The civil society should come forward to build a democratic, terrorism and corruption-free Bangladesh in the new millennium, speakers at a roundtable yesterday emphasized.

The civil society needs to do something about governance and politics, as the rich people are dominating the political, business and all other sectors while the majority of the people remain outside the entire ball game which is creating a 'dual society', they opined.

The roundtable on "Bangladesh in the new millennium" was jointly organised by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) and the Bangla Daily 'Prothom Alo' at the BIDS conference room.

BIDS Director General Abu

Ahmed Abdullah and Prothom Alo Editor Motiur Rahman moderated the roundtable.

Taking part at the discussion, Prof. Rehman Sobhan, Chairman, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), was critical of the existing dualism in education and health sectors which separated majority of the population from a handful of few rich people, and called for evolving a mechanism for the betterment of the under-privileged class.

Politics in Bangladesh is now a rich man's game and wealthy people dominate the whole democratic structure, which is not going to change the social order for the better, he said.

"A dual society is being created and market forces continue to malfunction as 70 to 75

per cent people are not getting quality education or healthcare facilities."

If the civil society wants to change the situation, it has to get into the game, he said. "If you don't democratise the economic opportunities, the market will be a constrained one."

"Unless you address these problems, you are creating a serious crisis," he told the roundtable.

To address these issues, quality education and healthcare system should be provided to the majority of the people and investment in these sectors should be increased, Prof Sobhan pointed out.

Barrister Ishiaq Ahmed said state power is being misused due to "criminalization of politics and patronization of terrorism". Crime rose to an alarming height because of poor condition in the disposal of criminal cases.

He suggested the formation of small courts with High Court judges for speedy disposal of criminal cases and dispensation of justice to the oppressed.

Prof. Mozaffar Ahmed called for taking a forward-looking education policy without delay to improve the already 'shaken' education sector.

Referring to a study, he said 20 per cent diagnostic reports were usually misplaced and doctors signed 50 per cent reports without having a glance at them at all.

Prof. Jamilur Reza Chowdhury urged the authorities concerned to utilize local expertise and raw materials in any infrastructure-building in future.

PDB Chairman Guamrul Islam Siddiqui highlighted 'extreme controlling attitude on the part of the concerned ministries in different sectors like power and gas.

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Pro-Putin party fare well in Duma polls

MOSCOW, Dec 20: The pro-Kremlin Unity party led centrist groups today to their strongest election showing in the post-Soviet era and provided a ringing endorsement of Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and his presidential ambitions, reports AP.

Centrist groups accounted for four of the six leading parties in Sunday's voting and were set to claim more than half the seats in parliament's lower house, the State Duma. As a result, President Boris Yeltsin could have a cooperative parliament for the first time, and economic reforms are likely to face less resistance.

Unity and the Communist Party were running neck-and-neck today for the top spot. With more than 80 per cent of the votes counted, the Communists had a slight edge with 24.4 per cent of the vote, compared to 23.7 per cent for Unity.

The Communists were the largest single faction in the outgoing parliament — and probably will be again — but their hard-line allies fared poorly overall. Communist influence appeared likely to decline.

"For the first time in 10 years the Duma will not be controlled by the Communists. This victory is hard to overestimate," said Sergei Kiriyenko, a former prime minister who leads the Union of Right Forces, a centrist group that finished fourth, better than expected.

See also page 9

Outsiders, expelled students break DU gate

A group of youths broke a sealed gate of a dormitory of Dhaka University on Sunday night, few years after it was closed to check troubles, reports UNB.

They also demonstrated on the campus and shouted slogans in front of the DU Vice-chancellor's residence against police raid on the hall.

Sources said the group, comprising both outsiders and expelled students led by Mainuddin Ahmed Babu, president of Chhatra League at Sergeant Zahirul Huq Hall broke the sealed gate at around 9.30 pm Sunday.

Hall sources said a large number of general students were also present when the gate fell. It was a long-cherished desire of the general students to go to Nikhet using the shortcut.

Babu was expelled from the university for terrorist acts on the campus and was staying in the hall along with his wife. Babu was expelled from the university for terrorist acts on the campus and was staying in the hall along with his wife.

Following the incident, police raided the dormitory to arrest Babu, but failed to get him or recover anything from the hall.

The university authorities had closed the gate on the western side of the hall to check criminal acts through the passage. Hall authorities informed they did not yet take any action following the incident and that the gate still remained open.

Siddique

From page 1

vention. I have invited Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia and sought her good wishes. Siddique said emerging from the meeting held at 29 Minto Road in the evening.

He informed that he had invited all political parties, excepting one, to attend the convention.

When asked whether the invited party is Jamaat, he smiled and said yes that type of party. He, however, didn't mention any name.

On another query, he said: "I have also invited the leaders of the ruling Awami League and tomorrow I will invite the party chief to attend the function."

When asked whether Khaleda Zia had accepted the invitation and would attend it, he said: "all invitations are not for attending." But the BNP chief wished success of the convention, he added.

Later, he met with other BNP leaders and MPs present at Minto Road.

Meanwhile, Jatiya Party secretary general Nazirul Rahman Manjur and president member Kazi Firoz Rashid met with Khaleda Zia and invited her to attend JP's iftar party to be hosted by H M Ershad in honour of the politicians.

The iftar will be held on Wednesday at Asiatic Society premises at Tejgaon.

He informed that the JP has decided not to invite the ruling Awami League and the 11-party alliance at the iftar.

Shibir

From page 1

Izharul Islam and Jamaat central secretary general Maulana Matiuur Rahman Nizami attended the janaza.

Shibir and police filed three separate cases with Hathazari thana accusing 35 Chhatra League leaders and activists in this connection. Hathazari police arrested four BCL leaders from the campus this morning.

The arrested are — Ashraf Sadat Chowdhury Tanvir, Akter Hosain Javed, Mizbaul Huq and Rabulul Islam.

Meanwhile, all the dormitories of the university except women's halls were vacated before 10 am today.



AFP file photo of Julia "Butterfly" Hill atop a Redwood tree in the Headwater Forest (northern California) in 1998.

Hill wins her battle against loggers

WASHINGTON, Dec 20: After spending two years in a 600-year-old redwood tree, an environmental activist descended from her perch Saturday, victorious in her battle against loggers who sought to clear the area of trees, reports AFP.

Julia "Butterfly" Hill, 25, made the tree her home as a protest against the harvesting of old-growth forest in California by Pacific Lumber, the company which owned the land.

Hill agreed to pay Pacific Lumber \$50,000 dollars to spare the tree, which she dubbed "Luna."

According to media reports, Hill lived perched on a tree limb some 18 stories above ground, on a tarpaulin-covered plywood

platform. Food and water was hoisted to her by a pulley from the ground.

Hill said the settlement was a victory for the preservation of California's virgin forest.

"We have to begin recognising the intrinsic and vital value of life that no amount of money can ever replace," she said after reaching her agreement with Pacific Lumber.

No matter what our differences, we can find our common ground," she said.

A Pacific Lumber spokesman called the accord a "unique situation" and said the company agreed to the settlement out of concern for Hill's health during the upcoming winter months.

Unicef to expand its arsenic mitigation programme

By Staff Correspondent

The Unicef is committed to helping Bangladesh combat the scourge of arsenic and has launched a National Communication Strategy for Arsenic Mitigation in Bangladesh.

Carol Bellamy, executive director of the Unicef (The United Nations Children's Fund), said this at a press conference at Dhaka Sheraton yesterday.

Bellamy, who is visiting Bangladesh for the second time, said the Unicef has already taken up programmes in four thanas and intends to expand the programme to 50 thanas within the next year.

The organisation is committed to spending about 8.9 million US dollars for arsenic mitigation during the next year while nearly 15 million dollars is due to be spent in the next four years. The work on arsenic mitigation will take place along with work in the health and sanitation sectors, she said.

More funds are expected to be attracted from other sources including UN bodies for arsenic mitigation, health and sanitation projects in Bangladesh, the Unicef executive director informed.

At the national level, the Unicef support for arsenic mitigation includes testing of existing wells to identify safe sources of water, provision of alternative safe health trainers, training of health trainers, patient identification and mass interpersonal campaigns at household and village level.

Shahida Azfar, country representative and June Kunugi, head of information section of Unicef in Bangladesh assisted Bellamy at the press briefing.

Bellamy, former director of the United States Peace Corps who has extensively served in the public sector including five years in the New York State Senate, also spoke about ongoing projects of Unicef in Bangladesh. She said that the headquarters was very pleased with the performance of its officials overseeing activities in Bangladesh and that under their supervision Unicef was able to take up many activities

Opposition 'Action Council' by Dec

By Staff Correspondent

The Liaison Committee of the BNP-led opposition alliance will form by this month the proposed 'Action Council' from city to union levels to further intensify the current one-point movement.

It was decided at a meeting of the committee held at 29 Minto Road, the official residence of the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament with BNP vice chairman M Shamsul Islam in the chair.

The meeting decided that Action Council would be formed at city, district and thana levels. The council will be formed up to ward level in all cities while at the thanas it would be constituted up to union level.

Referring to the proposed Action Council will be issued within a couple of days by secretaries general of BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote.

BNP leader Anwar Zahid, JP leader Kazi Firoz Rashid, Jamaat leaders Mohammad Kamruzzaman and A T M Azharul Islam, and IOJ leaders Fazul Haq Amin and A R M Abdul Matin attended the meeting.

Biggest heroin haul: One remanded

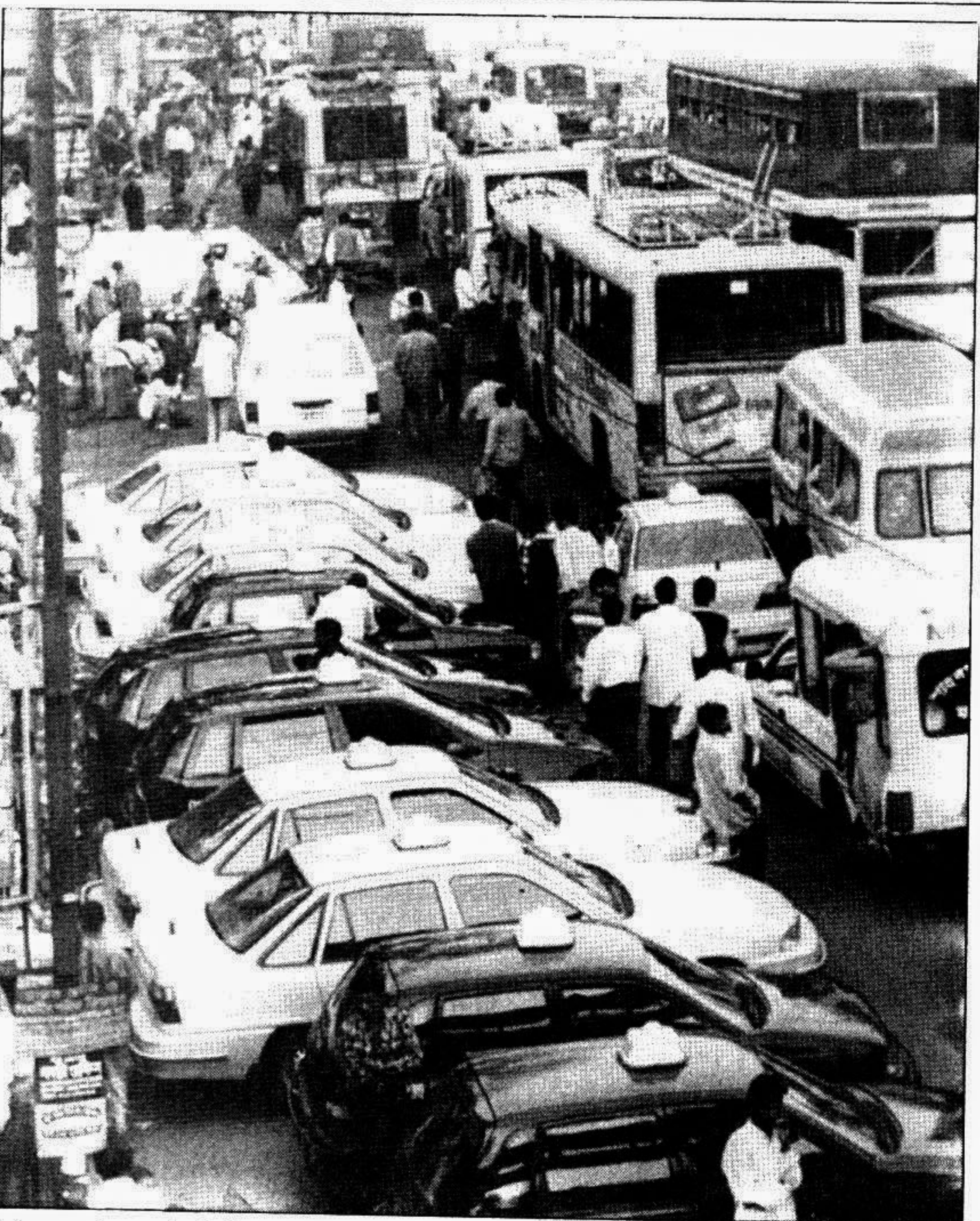
By Court Correspondent

Abdur Rouf, arrested on Tuesday from the city's Bangshal area in connection with the biggest ever heroin haul, was produced before the CMM's court yesterday.

The court placed him on one day's police remand.

Rouf was arrested by the Department Narcotics Control (DNC) for interrogation in connection with the recovery of 24.1 kg of heroin from a city hotel in September.

A total of 16 people have so far been arrested in the case.



Cabs are increasingly becoming a common sight in the capital but creating new problems due to lack of proper parking space. The photo shows that rent-a-cars cram the already-crowded vicinity of the former PG Hospital in the city.

— Star photo

Sharif's lawyers challenge court's jurisdiction

KARACHI, Dec 20: Lawyers defending Pakistan's deposed prime minister Nawaz Sharif today challenged the jurisdiction of the Anti-terrorism court, saying the court cannot charge Sharif with the allegation of waging war against Pakistan, reports Reuters.

Justice Shabir Ahmed said he would hear arguments and take a decision on the defence's application tomorrow and put off the formal laying of charges against Sharif and six others.

The defence application said that the government should have first laid out procedures and authorised a court before trying Sharif on charges of waging war against Pakistan — one of several allegations Sharif faces in the case.

"Offences against the state ... require a mandatory procedure as given in section 196 of the

Code of Criminal Procedure," the application said.

It said under Section 196, the initial complaint also cannot be filed with the police unless the government issues certain orders or empowers someone to file the complaint, which the defence said was not done in this case.

Sharif's lawyer, Ijaz Bat-talvi, told the court "There is a serious jurisdiction flaw... this case has to be stopped here."

The prosecutors earlier agreed to hand over to the defence the tapes of the conversation between ground control of Karachi airport and the plane carrying army leader General Pervez Musharraf from Sri Lanka to Karachi on October 12.

The dispute had caused two adjournments in the last two weeks and delayed the formal

laying of charges against Sharif, his brother Shahbaz and five others.

Sharif and others are accused by the prosecution of attempting to eliminate army leader General Pervez Musharraf by denying landing rights to an aircraft bringing him and about 200 passengers from Sri Lanka to the Karachi airport on October 12. Hours later Musharraf overthrew Sharif in a bloodless coup.

Sharif, during a break, told reporters that he and his party would make no compromises with the military government.

"There will be no compromise. I have told all Muslim Leaguers that there should be no compromise," he said. Sharif's trial cannot start unless the judge formally lays charges and solicit pleas from the accused.

DDTA polls today

By DU Correspondent

Election to the 15-member executive committee of the Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DDTA) will be held at the University Club today.

Two panels — Pro-Awami League Blue Panel and BNP-supported, pro-opposition, White Panel — are contesting the election this year.

Some 1,200 teachers of the university are likely to exercise their franchise in the voting, scheduled to be held from 10 am to 2 pm. Prof. Abu Zafar Mahmud will conduct the election.

Prof. RIM Aminur Rashid of Physics department and Prof. S M A Fayez of Soil Science are contesting for the post of the president from Blue and the White Panels, respectively.

Blue panel contender Prof. M Anwar Hossain of Zoology department will contest for the post of general secretary while the incumbent general secretary Ferdos Hossain of Political Science will seek re-election as the White panel contender.

The other candidates of the Blue panel are: Prof. Abdul Mannan Chowdhury of Management for the post of vice-president, Dr. Mohammad Ashraf Uddin Chowdhury of Economics for the post of treasurer and associate professor Hashibur Rashid of Management for that of the joint secretary.

Those contesting for the posts of members to the executive committee are Dr A J M Newshar Ali Khan, Dr ATM Nurur Rahman Khan, Dr Kazi Shahidullah, Dr Syed Gias Uddin Ahmed, Mohammad Uddin Rumi, Nasreen Mahab, Dr Mohammad Moniruzzaman, Dr Mohammad Muhiur Rahman, Dr Mohammad Mesbah Uddin Ahmed and Dr Shariful-ha Bhuiyan.

The candidates of the White Panel are: Prof. Anwar Hossain of IBA for the post of vice-presi-

Teenage boy shot in city

By Staff Correspondent

The hoodlums shot a teenage boy when he refused to keep their illegal firearms at Laxmibazar in old part of the city yesterday evening.

Julhas, the 14-year-old employee of a book binding shop at Rishikesh Das Lane, was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with bullet injuries in his jaw, hospital sources said.

The incident occurred at his place of work at around 5:45 pm. The hoodlums brandishing a pistol asked Julhas to keep it in his possession. He was shot in his jaw when he refused to keep the pistol, sources said.

Bullet hit Julhas was rushed to DMCH, sources added.

When contacted Sutrapur police said they heard about the incident, but they could not give further details.



GET READY FOR THE
MILLENNIUM BIG BANG
ON DECEMBER 30

Rising Stars
THE BEST TEEN MAGAZINE IN TOWN

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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