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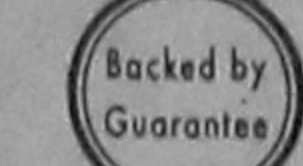
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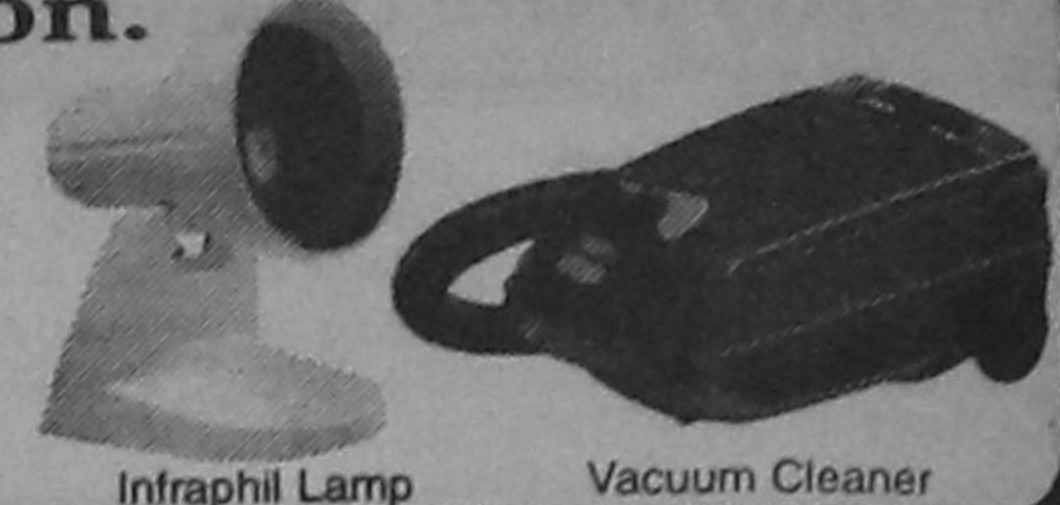


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80 pc cancers are linked to behavioural factors

WASHINGTON, Jan 22: Women who are rushing to get tested for so-called breast cancer genes seem to be forgetting that behaviour is a bigger factor in their risk than genes, experts said yesterday, reports Reuters. A study of women who signed up for genetic testing showed many were engaged in high-risk behaviours such as smoking and failing to use sunscreen.

Writing in the journal Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers, and Prevention, Emmons and colleagues said they surveyed 119 women who had signed up to be tested for mutations to the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes, which have been linked to breast and ovarian cancer. The women answered questions about various health practices. Eight per cent admitted to being current smokers, 27 per cent said they did not engage in regular, moderate exercise, 46 per cent did not regularly protect themselves from sun exposure, 39 per cent said they did not eat the recommended five servings of fruit and vegetables

day, and 9 per cent drank at least one alcoholic drink a day. Smoking is strongly linked to lung and other cancers, while skin cancer is becoming more common in many countries including the United States. People who exercise and eat plenty of fruits and vegetables have a markedly lower risk of both cancer and heart disease. Regardless of whether a woman is found to have an inherited predisposition to breast or ovarian cancer, she can still take control, through her behaviour, of her risk for a wide variety of other malignancies, Dr Judy Garber of Dana-Farber, who also worked on the study, said. It is not yet clear whether healthy diet and exercise can reduce the incidence of breast cancer in women with the inherited risk.

JCD-BCL clash at Natore: 30 hurt, 31 held

From Our Correspondent NATORE, Jan 22: At least 30 people were injured in a gunfight between the activists of BCL and JCD at Natore NS Govt College today. Police and witnesses said the clash took place at around 1pm over admission to honours first year classes in the college. Both sides fired shots and exploded crackers during the clash that continued for two hours. Police intervened and fired tear gas shells to disperse the feuding groups. They also recovered four revolvers and 17 bullets. At least 31 people, including JCD's district unit President Saiful Islam and General Secretary of the college students' union Zahurul Islam were arrested. After the incident, the college authorities have postponed the admission to honours classes.



Stalls are being set up at the venue of the Dhaka International Trade fair at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city — Star photo

Assault at TSC They demand withdrawal of expulsion of the accused

By DU Correspondent A small section of students of Dhaka University is agitating on the campus in demand for withdrawal of expulsion of two fellow students in connection with assault on a woman at TSC during the New Year's celebrations. The DU authorities had temporarily expelled the two-Fazlul Haq Russel and Khan Mesbahul Alam Tutul -- on the basis of a probe body's primary findings about their involvement in the assault. Both are leaders of the ruling party backed Bangladesh Chhatra League and are in jail custody now as accused in the assault case. The agitating students, using the banner of 'general students', brought out processions and staged demonstrations on the campus in the last few days. These students are allegedly backed by BCL, insiders said. The student body is yet to take any action against the two accused. They group met the Vice Chancellor and submitted a memorandum to him, some sources said. When contacted, The university authorities however denied the charge. The victim of the assault had earlier identified Russel and Tutul as the main accused in the case. Some BCL leaders, meanwhile, alleged that those activists of their organisation involved in foiling Bangbari Kader Siddique's convention in the city recently were also involved in the assault at TSC. This group (activists) enjoys patronage of the university high-ups and some leaders of the ruling party, a BCL leader alleged.

Ecuador's army chief dissolves 3-man junta

QUITO, Ecuador, Jan 22: Buckling to US pressure, Ecuador's military chief dissolved a three-man junta early today just hours after forming it and said the vice-president would assume power, reports AP. The move followed a confusing whirlwind of events that began Friday morning when Indian protesters joined by junior military officers stormed key government buildings demanding President Jamil Mahuad's ouster. Gen Carlos Mendoza told Ecuador Radio that he called on Mahuad to step down and later joined the junta to "prevent a bloodbath." He asked that the officers who took part in the uprising not be punished. There was no immediate confirmation of when Vice President Gustavo Noboa might assume the presidency. Constitutionally, he is next in line. There was no confirmation that the immensely unpopular Mahuad, who fled the presidential palace during the rebellion, had resigned after 17 months in office. In a televised address Friday afternoon he vowed not to step down. Mendoza said his decision to dissolve the junta came after discussions with US officials. (See also page 9)



The six teenage boys and girls brought back from India. — Star photo

6 teenagers trafficked to India brought back home

By Staff Correspondent Six teenage girls and boys who had been trafficked to India were brought back home on Friday at the initiative of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association. The victims were identified as Parveen, 17, Abu, 10, his brother Babu, 9, Sahil, 10, Selim, 13 and Khadija, 12. The association quoting a victim, Parveen, said that she was a student of class VI when she was trafficked by her aunt Zaheda Begum, two years ago. Zaheda took her to Rajasthan in India and sold her off to another trafficker named Nabwa Seth for Rs. 7,000 only. Nabwa bought her only to auction her at a much higher price, Parveen said. As soon as she realised Nabwa's motive, she made an abortive attempt to escape, she added. Nabwa's accomplices hauled her up and tortured her, Parveen said, adding police rescued her from captivity when the matter spread among the people of the locality. Parveen was kept at a woman's shelter home in Rajasthan before being sent to Bangladesh on Friday, she said. Abu and Babu, two brothers -- who also returned home along with the group could say that their father's name was Harun Mia. One woman, who pretended to be their mother, was taking them to Dubai, but she was nabbed by the Mumbai police four years ago, the boys said. Later they were transferred to a shelter home in Mumbai and brought back to Dhaka on Friday, they added. The other girl Khadija also returned to the country from the same shelter home. Her father Ibrahim along with her stepmother and two sisters also came to Mumbai, she said. Ibrahim was electrocuted, she said, adding that she was not aware of the whereabouts of her stepmother and two sisters. Another victim, Sahil of Khulna could not remember the names of his parents. He was only four years old when he was trafficked six years back. Police rescued Sahil and kept him at a shelter home at Delhi Gate. Selim, who comes from a broken family, went to Delhi on his own and was picked up by the police there about five months ago. Selim was only two years old when his parents had separated. When Selim's mother got married again, he was given shelter at his maternal grand mother's home. Selim started a wayward life when his maternal uncles threw him out of the house after the death of his grand mother.

Shibir continues siege programme on CU campus

From Our Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Jan 22: The Islami Chhatra Shibir continued its siege programme on the Chittagong University campus for the eighth day today. Meanwhile, Shibir leaders today refused to sit with the liaison committee on January 24. Earlier, the committee had sent a letter to Shibir leaders requesting them to attend the meeting. According to Prof Gazi Seleh Uddin, member secretary of the liaison committee, they didn't accept the letter till 3 pm. Academic and administrative activities were disrupted during the siege programme. No shuttle train or University bus plied between campus and the city. The Shibir has been enforcing an indefinite siege on the campus to protest killing of its two activists in a clash with Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) on the campus on December 19. The CU authorities formed a four-member liaison committee headed by Prof Abdus Salam of Chemistry department to restore academic atmosphere on the campus.

3,000 Tamils detained during hunt for Tigers

Ten-hour curfew near Colombo COLOMBO, Jan 22: Sri Lankan police rounded up more than 3,000 ethnic Tamil men and women during a major search operation for suspected Tamil Tiger rebels today under the cover of a 10 hour curfew, officials said, reports AFP. Most of the men and women were taken in for screening at the suburb of Wattala, just north of the capital Colombo, following three suicide bomb attacks since last month. Tamil legislator R. Yogarajan, who visited most of the schools where the detainees were photographed and video filmed, said 3,000 had been taken to a school in Wattala. About two hours after the curfew was lifted only 200 remained to be questioned, while the others were freed, Yogarajan said. This time there is a slight improvement in that the detainees were not asked to take off their shirts to be photographed, said Yogarajan, who protested against such filming during a similar search here on January 7. He said those detained were asked to walk past masked men who acted as informants. The snap curfew announced over state radio was aimed at helping security authorities conduct a cordon and search operation to look for members of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), officials said. The Kolonnawa suburb of the capital was also brought under curfew in addition to the district of Gampaha, which borders Colombo, officials said, adding the curfew was strictly enforced. The country's main oil storage depot is located at Kolonnawa. The LTTE staged a daring attack against the facility in October 1995, devastating more than a dozen storage tanks. Search operations here have been intensified amid fears the LTTE had infiltrated the city to carry out more suicide bombings. President Chandrika Kumaratunga was wounded in a suicide bomb attack at an election rally here on December 18. Twenty six people were killed and more than 110 others wounded in that attack. On the same day, another suicide bomber carried out an attack at an opposition rally in Gampaha district, killing 12 people, including a retired army general. Eighteen days later, a suicide bomber detonated explosives strapped to her body opposite Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike's office, killing 14 people.

DSE employees observe 9-hour strike

By Staff Correspondent The Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) employees yesterday observed a nine-hour strike demanding regularisation of their jobs and promotion. Around 32 DSE staff stopped work at 9:00 am. They resumed work at 5:00 pm when DSE chairman and councillors asked them to return to their work in presence of police. They were appointed during the stock market boom in June 1996 to cope with the increasing trade volumes. But when the stock market collapsed, the DSE did not absorb many of them.

Bangladesh makes progress in poverty alleviation: UNDP

NEW YORK, Jan 22: Bangladesh is making progress in alleviating poverty through programmes to aid street children and help women to start their own business, a study of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) said here today, reports BSS. "Recent analyses point to a decline in the incidence of both urban rural poverty," said the study based on Bangladesh's performance last year. It added: "The period under review has witnessed major developments in Bangladesh with implications for long-term growth, alleviation of poverty, and streamlined and decentralised governance structure." The report said poverty in urban areas declined from 44.4 per cent in April 1996 to 43.4 per cent in April 1997 while rural poverty fell to 46.8 per cent from 47.9 per cent in the same period. "An economic growth rate which averaged 5 per cent a year in the 1990s has helped to reduce poverty, as the government has encouraged private enterprises," it said. The UNDP highlighted its close tie with the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with a prime aim at poverty alleviation and human development. The UN body is extending its

Hasina renews dialogue offer

From page 1 dialogue. "My government will give all support to you. This is the way to defeat politics of destruction." The Prime Minister said her Cabinet has approved the Public Safety Bill to check crimes and ensure speedy disposal of criminal cases. Finance Minister SAMS Kibria, Industries Minister Tofal Ahmed and Commerce Minister Abdul Jaal also spoke on the occasion. Speakers from the business community included FBCCI President Abdul Awal Minto, Bangladesh Chamber and Industry (BCI) President Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) President Aftabul Islam, Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) President Latifur Rahman, Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) President Anisur Rahman Sinha, former FBCCI president Yusuf Abdul-Jah Harun, Bangladesh Textile Association (BTA) President Salman F Rahman and President of the National Association of Small and Cottage Industries AKM Shamsuddoha. The business leaders said law and order is deteriorating because of political unrest resulting from the government opposition stand-off. FBCCI President Abdul Awal Minto said political unrest will not end without a consensus between the government and the Opposition. "Political stability is the first pre-requisite for achieving economic goals. There should be a code of ethics for everyone to follow. The country has abundant resources for development. Even after five per cent growth in the last two financial years, only 0.02 per cent of the people who were under the poverty level could cross it." Information Technology (IT) has been identified as a thrust sector but desired results can not be achieved due to BTTB monopoly, the FBCCI president said. Private sector Internet service providers should be allowed to avail faster and cheaper service, he added. MCCI President Latifur Rahman said strikes, hartals and many other factors are affecting economic development of the country. These issues have to be resolved through consensus. Political uncertainty is putting us to a very grave situation. Like the government, the Opposition has also a key role to play to resolve the issues, Rahman said. Regarding deterioration in law and order, Rahman said, "It is an issue linked with good governance. The Opposition should look at itself as the government in waiting and they should contribute to solving the issues." India is moving fast. Bangladesh has to diversify its exports in areas like vegetables and agro-based products. Drawing Industries Ministers' attention, Rahman said, "When Tofal Ahmed was commerce minister, he took initiative for duty-free export of 25 items to India, which could not be implemented till date. This could support many small and medium industries." He said the stock market in the country is in a slump in contrast to a booming market in India. The MCCI president suggested the authorities to approach the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) for an 'equity support fund' to revive the stock market. He said the banking sector is in a "critical" situation, which had not been dealt with. "There has to be a clear distinction between wilful and circumstantial loan defaulters. When businessmen approach banks for loans, they are refused due to earlier stuck up loans. The lending rate can be lowered by two to three per cent by effectively dealing with the problem of stuck up loans. The entire business community is facing the problems and is made to pay the price. The business community has a lot to contribute to the nation. But our hands are tied. Give us the environment to work," Latifur Rahman said. He also praised the government for effectively handling the situation after the devastating flood in 1998. BGMEA President Sinha said if the government can resolve the stand-off by giving concession to the Opposition, the nation will give it a reward many times its sacrifices. "Businessmen are being killed for not paying toll to terrorists. Hartals are seriously affecting business and the country's economy. When we see a tendency to bring out prisoners by reducing their jail terms, we understand the politics behind it. We did not celebrate the new millennium. We were rather busy in convincing buyers that there would not be any more hartal in the country," Sinha said. He said political parties should go for alternatives to hartal and strike to make their point. They should use radio, television and newspapers to express their views and mobilise public opinion instead of calling strikes, keeping shops closed and burning buses. He observed that an elected government should be allowed to complete its term.

DU students' rally today

By DU Correspondent General students of the Dhaka University will bring out a procession from the campus and hold a rally in front of the National Press Club today protesting assault on a young lady during New Year's celebrations on the campus, said a press release. The students under the banner of 'Students of Dhaka University Against Sexual Harassment (SDUASH)' will take up an elaborated programme to create public awareness against sexual harassment. The programme will be announced at the rally. The procession will start from the Aperiajeo Bangla at 11:00 am, the release added.

Rallies today

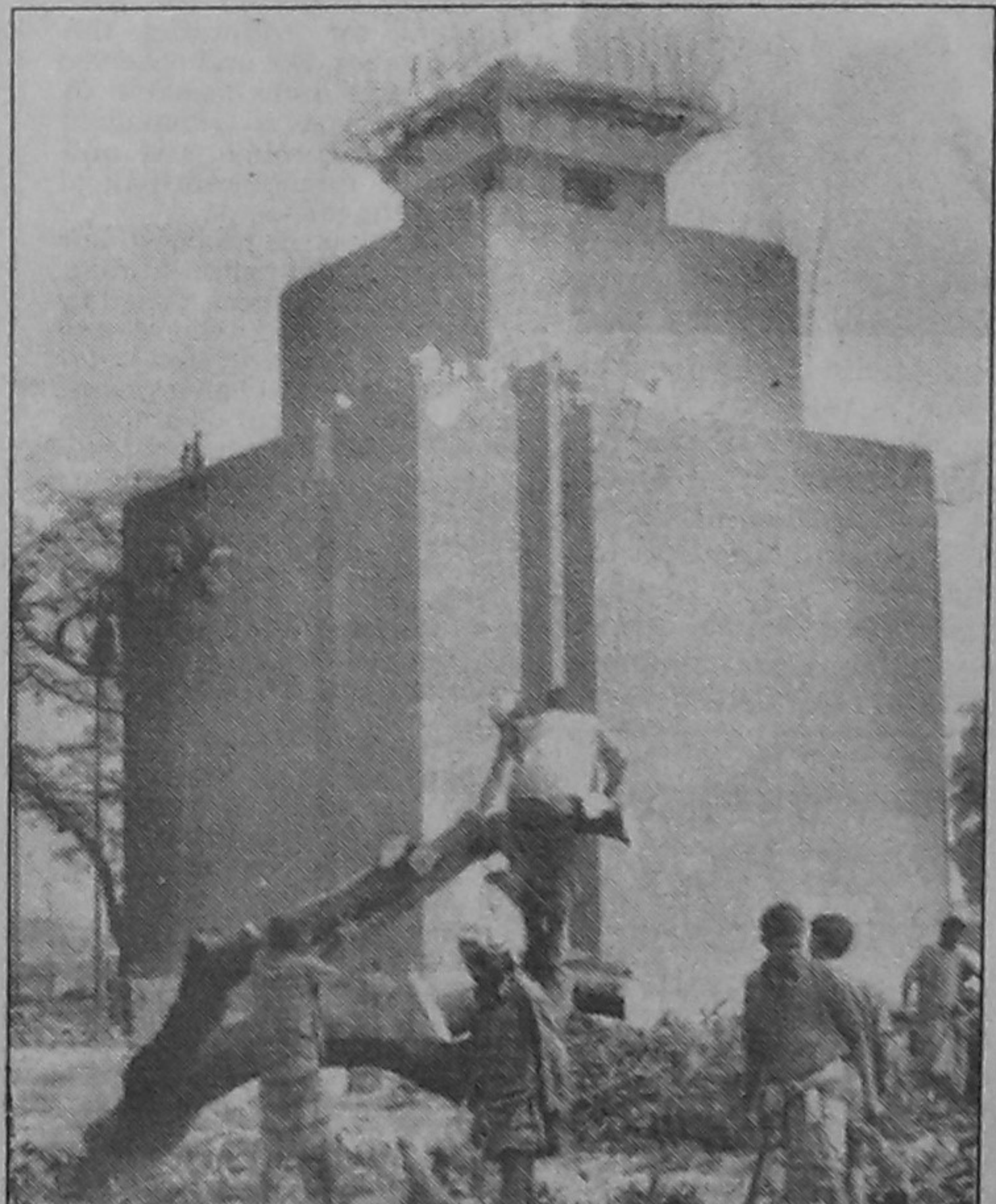
From page 1 gramines like hartal and blockade will be announced from separate rallies of the opposition parties prior to the mass procession. Zahid said the liaison committee meeting extended its full support to the hartal call in Chittagong today to protest the killing of a Shibir activist. He said the opposition will soon intensify the one-point movement. BNP leaders M Shamsul Islam MP, Tariqul Islam and Anwar Zahid, JP leaders ABM Golam Mostafa and Mostafa Jamal Haider, Jamaat leaders Matur Rahman Nizami, Mohammad Kamaruzzaman, Abdul Quader Mollah and ATM Azharul Islam, and IQJ leaders Fazlul Haq Amini and ARM Abdul Matin attended the meeting. City BNP also held a meeting yesterday to make today's public meeting at Paltan Maidan a success. Chaired by Sadek Hossain Khoka MP, it was attended by joint convenors and BNP's ward commissioners.

Russian crew threaten to set ablaze ship at Mongla port

BAGERHAT, Jan 22: Russian crew of a foreign ship anchored at Mongla port have threatened to set ablaze the ship if the ship owner do not pay their dues 50,000 US dollar soon, reports UNB. The 22 crew of Panamanian flag carrier MV Elizabeth said the ship owner is to pay the money according to the agreement on reaching the port. The ship reached the Mongla port on January 6 with clinker from Indonesia. But the ship owner has not yet paid the money, the crew said. Chris Damlodaulf, representative of the ship filed a case against the Russian crew with a Magistrate's Court here on January 11 accusing them of keeping hostage the other crew in the ship. Damlodaulf told UNB that the crew have been requested to collect their money from Hotel Royal in Khulna after leaving the ship. But the crew refused to leave the ship and collect the money, instead they have been issuing threat for setting fire to the ship. Informed sources said Mongla police tried in vain to evict the Russian crew. The case was transferred to the Marine Court in Dhaka. The police was also asked to investigate the matter.

Golf title

From page 1 Bhutan and Nepal finished fifth and sixth respectively. Besides, the Toyota SAARC Friendship Cup golf tournament was held at the course alongside the main tournament. Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria inaugurated the tournament as the chief guest. He also took part in the tournament. KGC president and Chief of Army Staff Lt General Mohammad Mustafizur Rahman was present on the occasion. Tshenchok Thinley of Bhutan and Col M Aminul Islam became champion and runner-up in the tournament.



The weather office in the city's Agargaon area is undergoing renovation. — Star photo