

**What's on today . . .**

**World newspaper exhibition:** The time of the New Millennium World Newspaper Exhibition has been extended for two more days. Venue: National Museum, Shahbagh. It will remain open from 3 pm to 7.30 pm on Friday and from 9.30 am to 5 pm on Saturday.

**Drawing competition:** Padatik Natya Sangsad organises a drawing competition for the children to mark the Ekushey February. Venue: Shishu Academy. Time: 10 am.

**Discussion on PSA:** Bangladesh Manobdhikar Sammonoy Parishad Coordinating Council for Human Rights in Bangladesh has organised a discussion on 'Public Safety Act and Human Rights'. Venue: Gano Unnayan Granthagar auditorium. Time: 3.30 pm.

**Workshop:** A two-day regional workshop on 'Settlement of the Urban Poor: Challenges for the New Millennium', will begin. Coalition for the Urban Poor (CUP) and ADAB will jointly organise the regional workshop. Venue: CIRDAP auditorium, Chameli House, 17, Tophkhana Road.

**Confce on N-disarmament:** The three-day international conference on Nuclear Disarmament in South and Southeast Asia will begin. Organisers: Community Development Library and FOCUS on the Global South. Venue: Hotel Purbani. Time: 9 am.

**Mass rally:** USC Canada-Bangladesh in collaboration with Adolescent Development Forum-Bangladesh organises a mass rally to mark the Adolescent Day. Route: Shahbagh National Museum to Jatia Press Club. Time: 9 am.

**IUBAT workshop:** International University of Business Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT) is organising a 3-day workshop on 'Economic Management' in collaboration with the Canadian Consortium of Management Schools (CCMS) and Dalhousie University, Canada. Venue: IUBAT campus, Dhanmandi.

**Annual convention:** The seventh annual convention and scientific seminar of Bangladesh Gastroenterology Society will be held. Chief guest: Dr M Amanullah, State Minister for Health and Family Welfare. Venue: BCPS auditorium, Mohakhali. Time: 9.00 am.

**Charity Bazar:** Zonta Club IV will hold a day-long Charity Bazar and food festival in aid of acid burn victims. Venue: RAOVA Club ground, New DOHS. Time: 10.00 am - 5.00 pm.

**Annual sports '99:** Nayan Action Foundation (NAF) holds the annual sports '99 for Jiban Sena under the ISCO Programme. Chief guest: Prof Jinatun Nessa Talukdar, State Minister for Women and Children's Affairs. Venue: Lalmitia Housing Society Boys School Playground. Time: 9.00 am.

**Int'l workshop:** A two-day international workshop on Small-scale Food Processing for Sustainable Livelihood in Asia begins. Organiser: Intermediate Technology Group-Bangladesh, a UK-based international development organisation. Chief guest: Amir Hossain Amu, Minister for Food. Venue: Hotel Sonargaon. Time: 9.30 am.

**Debate:** North South University Debating Club in association with Democracywatch begins the eight day long 'Democracywatch Democracy Debates'. Venue: North South University Hallroom. Time: 11.00 am.

**Workshop:** A weeklong workshop on 'Carbon Dioxide Enrichment Rice Research and Policy Interaction' begins. Organisers: National IGBP Committee of the Bangladesh Academy of Sciences, South Asian Committee (SASCOM) of the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP), Asia Pacific Network (APN), BARC and SPARRO. Venue: BARC auditorium. Time: 3.00 pm.

**Photography exhibition:** The High Commission of India and Pathshala - The South Asian Institute of Photography will run a two-week long exhibition of photographs taken by Raghu Rai. Venue: Drik Gallery, House No 58, Road No 15/A, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 4.30 pm.

**Discussion meeting:** A discussion meeting on Public Safety Act, 2000: A Jurisprudential Overview will be held. Venue: Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs (BILIA) seminar room, House- No 22, Rd No 7, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 3.30 pm.

**FEMA discussion meeting:** Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA) in collaboration with Study and Research Group of MSS will hold a discussion meeting on the present political impasse. Venue: Seminar room of IDB Bhaban, Sher-e-Banglanagar. Time: 4.00 pm.

**Inauguration:** The two weeklong annual exhibition of the Institute of Fine Art, Dhaka University will be inaugurated. Venue: IFA premises. Time: 4.30 pm.

**Classical vocal recitation:** Indian Council for Cultural Relations and The High Commission of India holds an evening of classical vocal recitation by Madhup Mudga. Venue: National Museum auditorium, Shahbagh. Time: 6.30 p.m.

**..... and tomorrow**

**Discussion meeting:** Bangladesh Arthanity Society will hold a discussion meeting on 'Study of Economics in Bengal: Problems and Scope of Research'. Venue: Planning and Development Academy auditorium, Nilkhet. Time: 10.00 am.

**Ghazal evening:** The National Association of UNESCO Clubs in Bangladesh will organise a solo ghazal evening by Tamanna Khanam Kanti. Venue: Russian Cultural Centre, Rd No 7, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 6.30 pm.

**Weather**

**Dry weather likely**

Light rain may occur at one or two places over Khulna and Sylhet divisions and weather may remain mainly dry elsewhere over the country with partly cloudy sky over Rajshahi and Dhaka divisions during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Night temperature may rise by 1-2 degree Celsius, Met Office said.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 28.3 degree Celsius was recorded at Khulna and Hatia and the lowest of 9 degree Celsius at Sitakunda.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5.55 pm and rises tomorrow (Saturday) at 6.29 am.

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

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	24.8	13.8	69	43
Chittagong	27.7	13.0	66	50
Rajshahi	26.2	11.0	84	71
Khulna	28.3	11.8	70	50
Barisal	27.2	10.0	85	62
Sylhet	25.7	13.4	79	56
Cox's Bazar	27.8	13.6	50	58

**Explosion in rice mill: Death toll rises to 5**

JOYPURHAT, Feb 17: The death toll in the boiler explosion at a rice mill rose to five after another injured died at Rangpur Medical College Hospital today, reports UNB.

On February 11, three workers were killed and three others injured in the explosion at the rice mill at Hichima area, four km off the district headquarters.

Seriously injured Bulu Mia, 35, Nurul Islam, 34, and Jasimuddin, 40, were admitted to Joypurhat General Hospital and later shifted to RMCH. Bulu succumbed to his injuries on Sunday.

Nurul Islam died today while condition of Jasimuddin was stated to be critical.

**No hartal in Pirojpur**

PIROJPUR, Feb 17: No hartal was observed in Pirojpur on the final day today of the opposition-called hartal three-day shut down, reports BSS.

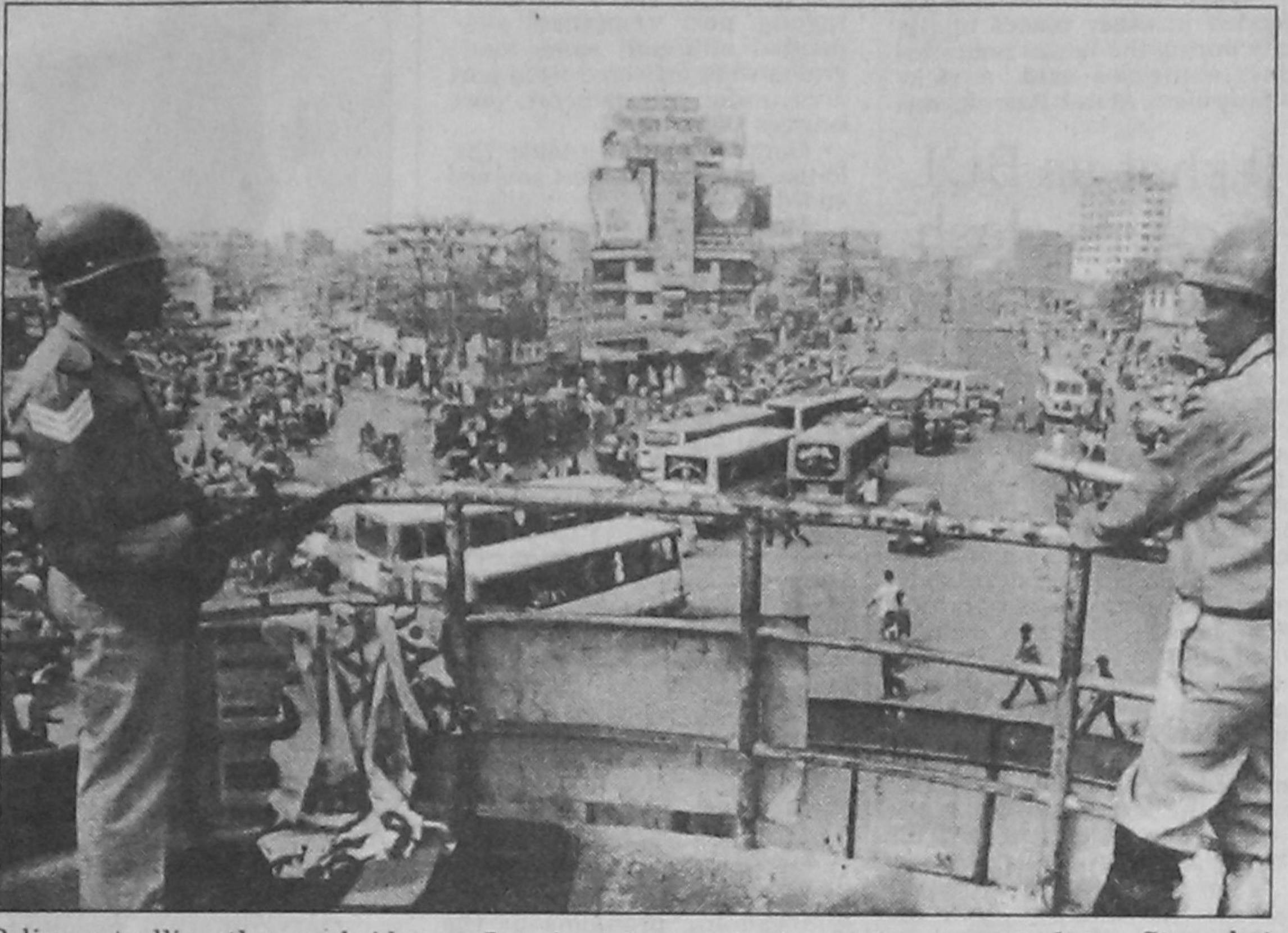
Traffic movement in the district was unhindered and all offices, business houses and financial institutions worked uninterrupted.

**17 miscreants held in Ctg**

CHITTAGONG, Feb 17: Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) rounded up 17 miscreants from different areas of the city today, reports BSS.



BNP activists brought out a procession in the city's Bijoy Nagar area during the hartal hours yesterday. — Star photo



Police patrolling the overbridge at Jatrabari during the hartal hours yesterday. — Star photo

**Video art film show today**

A two-day long video art film exhibition titled 'Nordic Video Week' will be held at the Institute of Fine Arts (IFA) premises today and tomorrow, says a press release.

**Puja Committee Family Day today**

The Mohanagar Sarbajanin Puja Committee will hold its Paribar Dibash (family day) on the 'Dhakeshwari Mandir' premises today, reports BSS.

**US embassy closed on Feb 20, 21**

The offices of the US Embassy and the United States Information Service (USIS) in Dhaka will be closed on February 20 and February 21 on the occasions of President's Day and Mother Language Day, a USIS press release said, reports BSS.

**Death anniversary**

The second death anniversary of Mani Munshi, a founder member of Bangladesh Photo Journalists' Association will be observed today, says a press release.

**Mummy murder**

The second death anniversary of Abdur Razzak Khan, former president of Jessore Chamber of Commerce and former executive committee member of FBCCI, will be observed today, says a press release.

**Chehulum**

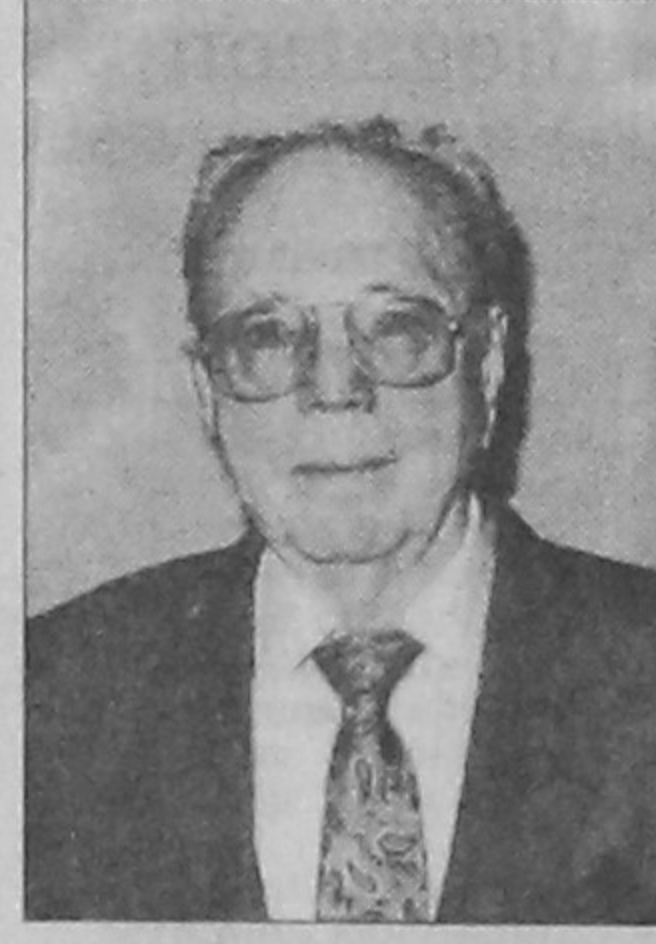
The chehulum of Altaf Husain will be held after Asr prayers today at his residence at House No 84, Road No 13, Block-C, Banani, says a press release.

**ICDDR,B fund-raising event tonight**

By Staff Correspondent International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) will hold a fund-raising event at Hotel Sonargaon in aid of its Hospital Endowment Fund with a slogan 'We are saving lives'.

**US orthopaedic surgeon due tomorrow**

By Staff Correspondent Professor R J Garst, a noted orthopaedic surgeon of USA, will arrive in the city on Saturday next. He will leave on February 27, a press release of the Orthopaedic Hospital said.



**Bail petition of 3 accused rejected**

By Staff Correspondent NARAYANGANJ, Feb 17: The District and Sessions Judge Court today rejected the bail petition of three accused in the sensational Mahmuda Sultana Mummy Murder Case.

**PSA**

From page 1 case filed by a businessman in North Kafrul area, accusing him and four others of kidnapping his son and demanding ransom, police said.

**Mummy murder**

Court source said, the three accused in the case — husband of Mummy, Abul Kalam Azad Ripon, sister-in-law, Rokhana Yasmin and mother-in-law Monwara Begum — were not produced in the court due to hartal.

**PSA to help stop illegal toll collection on roads: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said yesterday execution of the Public Safety Act would help stop illegal toll collection and musclemanry on roads and urged transport workers to strictly follow traffic rule for safe journey of passengers, reports UNB.

**50 injured**

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**Adulterated food**

From page 1 year training. But sources said, in addition to 13 trainees, about 12 inspectors 'are regularly doing their beat'.

When contacted, DCC's Chief Health Officer Ashraf Uddin said activities of the PHL could not be geared up due to shortage of manpower. He however said 'hundreds' of cases have been filed with the DCC court against unscrupulous traders and businessmen who sold or displayed adulterated food stuff.

He said the health department could not even evict unauthorised butcher shops and restaurants due to lack of logistics. He said they had a year-long scheduled program for a crackdown but it could not be implemented as DCC's Estate Department could not provide assistance.

But Chief Estate Officer Ehsanul Fatah said that eviction of such unauthorised establishments was at the bottom of DCC's priority list. The DCC is now busy seizing illegal rickshaws, he said.

The General Manager (Transport) who has magistracy power, has been given the responsibility to evict illegal meat shops but the drive is yet to take off, Fatah said.

The PHL remained almost inactive since the DCC office was shifted from Luxmibazar to Nagar Bhaban more than two years ago. The PHL was also shifted to a new office in May last year. New equipment were bought and the building housing the laboratory was given a facelift. The Daily Star had earlier published several reports on the PHL.

According to municipal laws, the PHL is the sole authority in the city to test food items. Inspectors can prosecute the offenders. According to the Pure Food Ordinance, 1959 and the Pure Food Rules, 1957, any one found adulterating foodstuff can be fined up to Tk 4,000 or sentenced to three months' imprisonment or both.

**50 injured**

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Processions of other parties were led by their respective leaders. Awami League and its front organisations also brought out separate anti-hartal processions at Bangabandhu Avenue, Tophkhana Road, Motijheel, Dholaipar and Shahbagh areas and held a rally at Muktangan in the afternoon.

Except two domestic flights of Biman, all domestic and international flights operated normally. Train and launch services were normal, according to sources in Bangladesh Railway and BIWTA.

A good number of auto-rickshaws, private minibuses and some state-run BRTC buses ply some specific roads in the city while the movement of rickshaws was almost normal.

Educational institutions, business establishments and most of the private offices remained closed. Some shops at Farmgate, Moghbazar, Santiganar and Khilgaon were seen open yesterday.

Attendance in the Secretariat and other government offices was thin.

Some commercial banks in the city did transaction behind closed doors.

There was no business at Dhaka Stock Exchange during the three day hartal, DSE officials said.

In Khulna city, ten people were injured in two incidents of clash between activists of BNP and Awami League.

Our correspondent from Rajshahi reported that said activists of both AL and BNP went on rampage in the city during the hartal hours.

AL activists brought out an anti-hartal procession at about 11 am and pelted stones at some buildings belonging to BNP leaders at Sovadighi crossing, attacked a Rupali Bank branch at Shaheb Bazar, a residential hotel owned by a BNP leader and two shops in presence of police and BDR.

The AL activists also attempted to attack the local BNP office and Rajshahi City Corporation office, but police obstructed them.

BNP activists exploded several bombs and ransacked two shops and damaged two motor bikes in the court area in the city. Pickets also pelted stones on a shuttle train standing at Rajshahi Court Station.

At Netrokona, a clash between pro- and anti-hartal activists led to a JCD leader bullet-hit and a Chhatra League leader stabbed.

Full text of the Public Safety (Special Provision) Act in Bangla on pages 8 and 9.

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**Clinton: Kashmir talks**

From page 1 Clinton's visit to South Asia during the week of March 20 will be the first by a US president since former President Jimmy Carter made a trip to the region in 1978.

Pakistan's military ruler Army Gen. Pervez Musharraf, who ousted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in a bloodless coup on October 12, has urged Clinton not to boycott Pakistan during the trip.

Skippping Pakistan could chill US ties with Islamabad, which was a Cold War ally of the United States and a main conduit for arms to the guerrillas who fought against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

The White House has so far said Clinton would visit India and Bangladesh, but US officials have not ruled out the possibility of his making a quick, airport stop in Pakistan as a gesture of goodwill.

Clinton said he believed India and Pakistan could flourish if they found a way to live with each other in peace.

"It is heartbreaking to me to see how much they hold each other back by being trapped in yesterday's conflicts," he said.

"If the tensions between India and Pakistan... could be resolved... the Indian subcontinent might very well be the great success story of the next 50 years," he said.

Earlier AP says: India and Pakistan have fought two wars over disputed Kashmir. Their simmering dispute over the part of the Himalayan state controlled by India is considered even more dangerous now that they both have exploded nuclear devices.

Clinton intends to visit India and also Bangladesh in March, but has taken no decision on Pakistan. This week, Sandy Berger, his assistant for national security affairs, met with several academics at the White House to discuss a possible presidential visit.

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**Irish-American deal**

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However, after US President Bill Clinton's schedule for Dhaka visit was announced last month, the government took steps to revitalise the Second Round Block Bidding process with special focus on the US companies. As part of these steps, Chevron-Texaco were invited along with other American oil companies which were somewhat discontinuing with the bidding process.

The energy ministry and Petrobangla jointly resumed the 'negotiation' process on Monday. They have already held new rounds of talks with Shell and Unocal—both of whom expressed their reluctance to drill exploratory well.

The energy secretary instructed the officials yesterday to take steps and prepare a draft PSC at least with Unocal by February 25, so that by the time the US President visits Bangladesh, an agreement may be signed.

Tullow, an oil company that has a total annual revenue of around five million Irish pounds, was selected by the government out of six bidders trying to win block 9 in the second round bid floated in mid-1997. Tullow was also offered block 11.

Although Tullow's financial health and experiences are not as sound as Shell, Mobil, Chevron-Texaco and Petronas, the government chose it on the ground of their work programme for both blocks 9 and 11.

Soon after the offer was made to Tullow, the government started seeking a 'financially strong' oil company or group of companies. In this process, the Mobil-Petronas joint venture, that had proposed a carrier over interest of 20 per cent to BAPEX, was lined first and then Chevron-Texaco. Mobil-Petronas was at first asked to tie up with Tullow for both the blocks. At that time Mobil-Petronas expressed their reservations about the work programme and a week later, the government deferred its original proposal and suggested them to tie up for block 11 only.

By that time, Chevron-Texaco was invited to talks and they accepted Tullow's work programme. Mobil-Petronas then said they were interested in the negotiations only if they were offered partnership in both the blocks. They were never invited after taking this stance.

Ultimately, Tullow-Chevron-Texaco talks failed and Chevron-Texaco left

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**12 killed in Bihar polls violence**

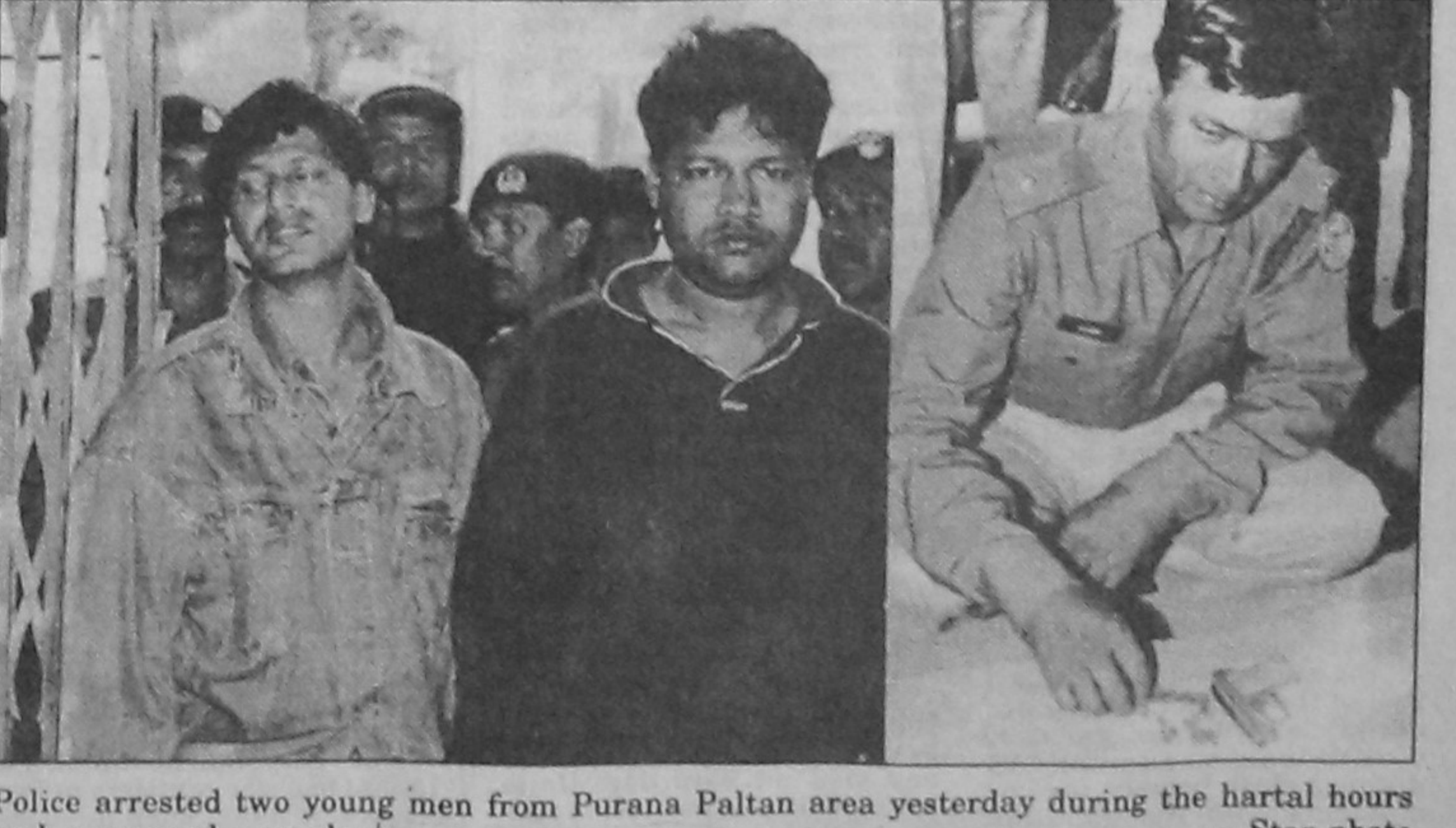
PATNA, Feb 17: Violence and election fraud marred the second phase of polling in the eastern Indian state of Bihar today, leaving 12 people dead and at least 19 seriously injured, police said, reports AP.

Activists of the ruling Rashtriya Janata Dal allegedly shot dead a member of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's Bharatiya Janata Party in northern Bihar, said police officials in Patna, the state capital.

**Feni tragedy**

From page 1 hospitals and clinics at Feni. Earlier, police arrested a doctor who owns a homeo pharmaceutical shop at Feni yesterday, on charges of supplying rectified spirit to different outlets in the district. Police, however, could not nab the owner of another homeo hall during a raid yesterday.

District administration has formed a three-member committee to probe the biggest alcoholic tragedy of Feni in recent memory.



Police arrested two young men from Purana Paltan area yesterday during the hartal hours and recovered a revolver. — Star photo