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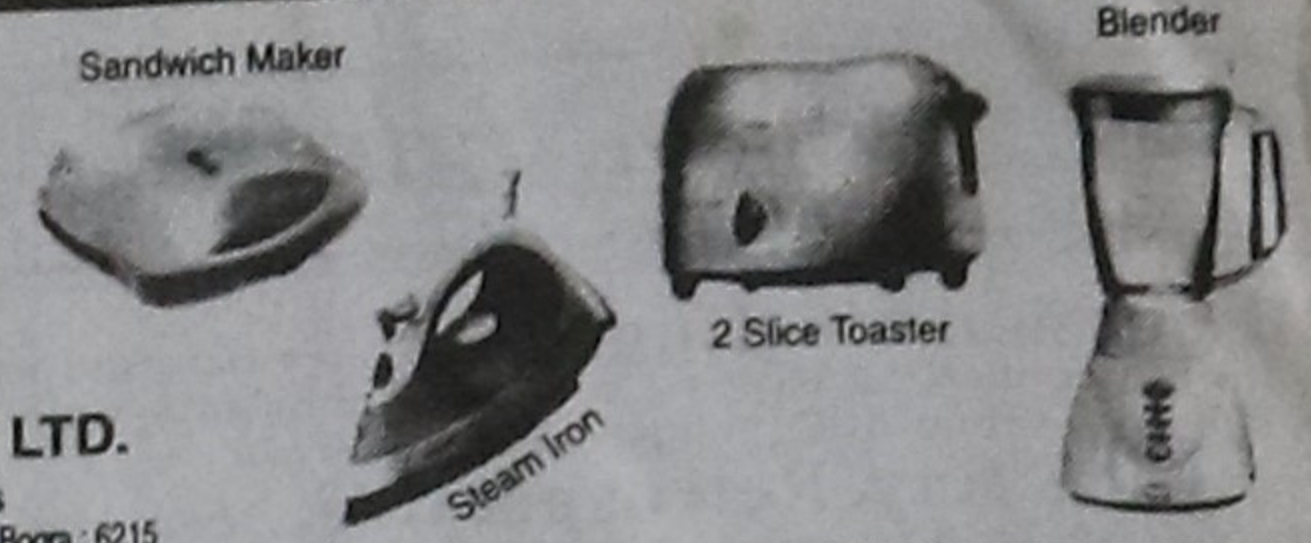
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Left leaders urge PM to ensure security of SUST students

Leaders of the 11-party Alliance called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office yesterday, reports BSS. They urged the prime minister to ensure security of the students of the Shahjalal University of Science and Technology so that they can attend their classes and pursue studies.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina assured the 11-party leaders that the government would ensure steps regarding the safety and security of the students.

Hasina expressed the hope that the university syndicate would act accordingly.

The 11-party leaders reiterated their stand against anti-liberation and fundamentalist forces during the meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. They said they are committed to upholding the spirit of the Liberation War and at the same time will remain ever vigilant to frustrate the evil designs of

Khaleque murder Police blamed for patronising killers

By Staff Correspondent

A section of Awami League leaders of Ward No 39 in the city have blamed police for 'patronising' killers and said they would stage street demonstrations demanding arrest of the killers of Local Juba League leader Abdul Khaleque.

The killing of Khaleque was a sequel to 'intra-party' feuds, they told this correspondent yesterday, seeking anonymity.

The leaders alleged that police failed to submit charge sheet in 'any of the cases for murder' of AL leaders of the area since the party came to power about four years ago. Rather, the complainants were harassed.

Khaleque, general secretary of Juba League, Unit in Ward No 39, was gunned down in front of the unit office at Karwan Bazar Thursday evening. His nephew filed a case with Tejgaon thana accusing six persons of the killing.

When contacted, police denied the accusation of patronising the killers. Investigations are at times delayed due to shortage of manpower and at times due to 'political pressure,' they said.

One of the six FIR-listed accused in the Khaleque murder case has been arrested, said Tejgaon police who are investigating the case.

The arrested was identified as Rafikul Islam, 22, of village Santoshpur in Faridganj thana of Chandpur. His brother Mohibur Rahman is also an accused in the case. Both of them are brothers of Hannan, an accomplice of notorious criminal Sweden Aslam now detained in Dhaka Central Jail.

The other accused are: Lamba Selim, Shaheeb Ali, Shamim Ahmed Bhutto and Cheat Zakir, police said.

Ex-BNP MP Rubel sent to jail

SHERPUR, Apr 30: Former BNP MP and convener of Sri-bordi thana BNP Mahmudul Haq Rubel was sent to jail in a corruption case today, reports UNB.

Rubel was sent to Sherpur district jail amidst tight security after a senior special judge rejected his bail petition. The case story says Rubel attacked one Musa Mia as 'Moktar Hossain' for drawing a grant of Tk 30,000 for a local school from Prime Minister's fund in 1997.

The cheque was originally issued to Moktar Hossain, chairman of the governing body of Baraikuchi Registered Primary School.

Rubel had been absconding since the case was filed on April 13, 1997.

Direct goods train service with India this month likely

BENAPOLE, Apr 30: Direct goods train service between Bangladesh and India is likely to begin this month, reports UNB.

Officials said Jessore-Benapole rail route has already been renovated for smooth running of freight trains between the two countries.

The authorities of both the countries reached a consensus on November last year on goods train movement. The officials said India is keen to introduce direct rail communication in Calcutta-Dhaka and Agartala-Akhaura routes.

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Golden Rice variety arrives, awaits field tests

By Reaz Ahmad

'Golden Rice', a genetically engineered crop variety, have entered Bangladesh for research purposes, official sources confirm.

Maiden entry of any genetically modified organism (GMO) took place quietly, but to no apparent, immediate avail.

Vitamin A-rich 'Golden Rice' would have to wait for unspecified time before being tested in the fields as the biosafety guidelines, a prerequisite for carrying out frontier researches, is not in place yet.

Official sources confirmed that Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) recently collected one kilogram of 'Golden Rice', a transgenic variety developed by a Swiss university.

Official sources confirmed that Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) recently collected one kilogram of 'Golden Rice', a transgenic variety developed by a Swiss university.

The genes were taken from daffodils.

Experts from home and abroad told The Daily Star that if and when it clicked, 'Golden Rice' could substantially contribute in solving the problem of vitamin A deficiency - an acute health problem for Asian children.

GMO means a genetically modified organism. GMOs are

living organisms whose genetic materials have been altered or modified by the techniques of modern molecular biology to make them capable of producing new substances or performing new functions.

Almost six months have elapsed since the Ministry of Science and Technology accomplished the job of preparing the 'Biosafety Guidelines for Bangladesh' and government endorsed it. But it is yet to be notified in the gazettes creating the roadblock for pursuing advance level biotechnological researches in the country.

MOA has already handed over the genetically engineered variety to rice scientists working in the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) but, sources said that till the 'National Committee on Biosafety of Bangladesh' (NCBB) is formed, experimenting of any transgenic materials remains forbidden.

NCBB recommendation is mandatory, as per the guidelines, in pursuing any work on genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Science and Technology Secretary M Fazlur Rahman told The Daily Star that formation of NCBB was being delayed because of the gazette notification.

He acknowledged that Min-

istry of Agriculture had been pressing for NCBB formation, sooner than later.

Dr Syed Hadiuzzaman teaches Botany at Dhaka University and has coordinated the preparations of the Biosafety Guidelines. He told this correspondent that there should be no further delay in pursuing the enormous potentials of biotechnology in the country.

"I don't know why it should take so long to notify the guidelines that the government endorsed last year through the gazette," said Prof Hadiuzzaman, who also runs the lone Biotechnology Research Centre of Dhaka University.

But everyone out there is not equally appreciative at the GMO-entry into Bangladesh. There are 'green' groups who dubbed the event as a criminal activity.

Farhad Mazhar of UBINIG, a biodiversity protagonist, is seeing Bangladesh's entry into this genetic engineering episode as a 'criminal offence on the part of the state.'

"Endorsement of a mere biosafety guideline does not validate biotechnological manoeuvring. Unless there is a piece of law, citizens would not get justice against biodegradation," said Mazhar.

Opposition opts for no hartal

From Page 1

She said cases have been filed under the PSA against the ministers who led the stick procession in the city, but no action has been taken. She demanded immediate arrest and trial of those ministers who 'violated law'.

Demonstrations will be held at thana headquarters from May 7 to 15 demanding immediate arrest and trial of the ministers, she announced at the meeting.

If the demand is not met by May 15, the BNP-led opposition

alliance will hold a joint 'mass procession' in the city on May 16, and tougher programmes will follow, she announced.

On AL's demand for completion of trial of the Bangladesh murder case, Khaleda Zia said, "Hundreds of people have been killed and tens of thousands repressed during this government's tenure. People are seeking justice. It can not happen that only they (AL) will demand justice while people will remain deprived".

Referring to the Prime Minister's challenge that there was

no corruption in MIG purchase, Khaleda Zia said ruling party men were involved not only in it but also in all big deals including the purchase of frigates, telephone equipment and allowing private banks.

"They must face trial for looting the wealth of the country and its people".

Khaleda Zia claimed that AL always damaged the image of the country abroad whenever it came to power. "The present Prime Minister's brother had committed bank dacoity when AL was in power earlier. Now her nephew has forcibly occupied a big house in the city."

AL had introduced Bangladesh in the world as a basket case earlier. Now, it has made the country the most corrupt one in the world," she said. JP Chairman Ershad termed the AL government the "most corrupt" one in the world and asked it to quit immediately for "your (AL leaders) survival".

He said after 28 years of independence, there can not be any anti-liberation forces in the country because everybody is doing politics openly as per laws and the Constitution.

Rather, the AL has worked against the independence and sovereignty of the country by signing the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty and the CHT accord, he alleged.

Jamaat Ameer Golam Azam said the High Court and the Supreme Court are the last shelters of the commonman. "My citizenship was snatched. I got my citizenship following the High Court order. I would not have got citizenship had there been no higher court," he said.

The people are behind the judges, he said. IOJ Chief Azizul Haq said the AL government has destroyed the image of the country. "There is no example in the world that a government threatened the judiciary and judges," he added.

About 35 leaders from the four parties addressed the meeting. They included BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and its central leaders M Saifur Rahman, Oli Ahmed, Khanadker Mahbubuddin Ahmed, Mirza Abbas, Abdus Salam; JP leaders Nazim Rahman Manju, ABM Golam Mostafa, ABM Ruhul Amin Hawlader and Saifur Rahman; Jamaat leaders Mohammad Kamaruzzaman and Abdul Qader Mollah; IOJ leader Fazlul Haq Amin and Jappa President Shafiqul Alam Prodhan.

— AFP photo

'Both SPA, PSA failed'

By DU Correspondent.

Speakers at a dialogue on 'Power and Public Safety' in the city yesterday said that the Public Safety Act (PSA) and the Special Power Act (SPA) failed to ensure security to the commonman and suggested reorganising the police force.

They stressed formation of a commission to monitor activities of police in the interest of the people.

The speakers dwelt on the PSA and the SPA with reference to laws of the land, state institutions, parliament, judiciary, police, coercive power and politics, human rights, minority rights and gender rights. Two students of Dhaka University - Zakia Haq and Sharif Atiqur Rahman - presented the findings of and recommendations in two studies on SPA and PSA conducted recently.

One study said people in general think that PSA is violative of human rights and 58 per cent of the respondents said its 'weak point' is that it was passed without the Opposition's presence in parliament. Besides, 86 per cent supported the provision of punishment for filing false case.

The respondents suggested the Opposition to make its points against PSA in the parliament and continue movement without calling hartal.

No conflict

From Page 1

In BNP between right and left or liberals and hardliners. Before any party programme is adopted, there is always an open discussion where different opinions also come up. But everyone work together after a decision is taken. We have explained this clearly in a statement earlier. We would also like to state that so far no movement of BNP has failed. The government has become isolated and rejected by the masses because of movement by the BNP," the press release said.

Slum at Paribagh demolished: 20 injured

By Staff Correspondent

At least 20 people including a student leader were injured in a police drive to demolish 300 shanties at Paribagh slum near Aziz Super Market under Ramna thana in the city yesterday morning.

The move to evict the slum dwellers was taken by police at the request of Dhaka City Corporation to widen the road in the area, sources said.

When contacted Ramna police said they did not evict the slum dwellers, rather, they demolished some illegal establishments near the road at the request of DCC.

The shanties raised along the haphazard road from Elephant Road Market to Paribagh Bazar were cordoned off by riot police at about 10:30 am, said witnesses.

See page 11 col 6



Newspapermen brought out a procession in the city yesterday in support of their 9-point demand. — Star photo

Asian migrant workers in KSA face HR abuses

Amnesty International reports

HONG KONG, Apr 30: Asian migrant workers in Saudi Arabia face a plethora of human rights violations such as flogging, amputation, torture and execution, which are perpetuated by a discriminatory judicial system, Amnesty International said today, reports AFP.

"Asian migrant workers in Saudi Arabia are particularly vulnerable. They suffer human rights abuses in silence and solitude with no one to turn for help," Amnesty said in a statement.

If arrested, migrant workers are often tricked or coerced into signing a statement in Arabic which they don't understand. "They are not informed of their rights, nor of the judicial process that awaits them," Amnesty said, adding they are often denied access to a lawyer

or consular access.

Between 60 and 80 per cent of Saudi Arabia's workforce are from Asian countries - mainly from Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, the Philippines and Nepal - often enticed by the chance to escape poverty and to provide for their families back home, it said.

Most are employed as domestic or manual workers and are completely dependent on their employers, who often confiscate their passports and prevent them from changing jobs or travelling outside of their area of work, Amnesty said.

Of the 767 executions recorded by Amnesty International between 1990 and 1999, over half were of migrant workers and a high proportion of those were Asian.

Filipino national James Re-

bebito was convicted of murder and executed in June 1996. He was held incommunicado for more than two years before the Saudi authorities informed the Philippines government that he had 'confessed to murder'.

Rebebito protested his innocence throughout but witnesses vouching for his innocence were prevented from testifying at his trial," Amnesty said.

The human rights group also warned that migrant workers who practice religious other than the officially sanctioned Sunni Islam risk arrest and torture.

"Christians, Sikhs and members of other religious minorities have been targeted for holding informal private worship groups in their homes or possessing religious literature," the organisation said.

US report says Pakistan & Afghanistan harbouring terrorists

NEW YORK, Apr 30: The annual US report on international terrorism, due to be issued tomorrow, identifies South Asia as a major source of the problem the New York Times said today, reports Reuters.

It said the 107-page State Department report named Afghanistan as posing a "major terrorist threat", partly because it sheltered Saudi exile Osama bin Laden, and accused Pakistan of harbouring and aiding known "terrorists", many fighting to wrest control of Kashmir from India.

"Yet the administration stopped short of adding either Pakistan or Afghanistan to its list of state sponsors (of terrorism), against which a series of tough sanctions automatically apply," the Times said.

[Details on page 5]

Khulna Jubo League leader slaughtered

From Staff Correspondent KHULNA, Apr 30: Local Jubo League leader Masud Farvez was slaughtered by unidentified terrorists at midnight last night.

Police recovered his beheaded body from the bank of the river Bhairab near Mirerdanga under Khanjahan Ali thana.

Police said the murder was committed while he was returning home by motorbike from his father-in-law's house at Abhoynagar thana. The alleged killers snatched his motorbike before slaughtering him, police said.

The motive behind the murder is yet to be known. But it may be a sequel to previous enmity with the armed cadres of an outlawed organisation against whom the slain Jubo League leader was always vocal, said local people.

A murder case has been filed with Khanjahan Ali thana in this connection.

Top terrorist held in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent KHULNA, Apr 30: Jalal Pathan, 30, one of the top terrorists of the city was arrested by police today.

He was so long wanted in connection with the murder of Chhatra League activist Nirmal Shah. Shah was killed in 1998 at Cemetery Road.

Police said that Jalal Pathan is one of the terrorists listed by KMP and approved by the Home Minister. He is wanted in several criminal cases also, police said.

Two new upazilas, 9 thanas to be set up

The government has decided to create two new upazilas, four posts of ADC (development and education), nine police stations and six police inquiry centres, reports UNB.

The decisions were taken at the 85th meeting of the National Implementation Committee on Administrative Reorganisation (NICAR) yesterday with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

The new upazilas are: Ashuganj in Brahmanbaria district and Matlab Uttar in Chandpur district.

Four posts of ADC (Dev and Ed) will be created in the district of Brahmanbaria, Pabna, Tangail and Narayanganj.

New police stations are to be set up at Shayestaganj in Habi-ganj, Sonaimuri and Char Jabbar in Noakhali, Matlab Uttar in Chandpur, Ruhia in Thakurgaon, Osmaniganj in Sylhet, Shaltha in Faridpur, Shalanga

in Sirajganj and Atakula in Pabna district.

Police inquiry centres will be established at Nijhumdip in Noakhali, Bairati Hat in Rangpur, Shilak Bazar in Chittagong, Chandrakona in Sherpur, Baroghati Chhittakhari in Panchagarh and Rajganj in Jessore district.

The meeting decided that Maniknagar would be the headquarters of Muljibnagar Upazila. It also decided that the upazila complexes would now be constructed on six acres of land instead of eight acres to save land for agriculture purpose.

Hasina said her government wanted to develop each upazila in a planned way with all civic amenities.

In the past, she said, upazila complexes were established without proper planning that resulted in the wastage of land and money.

Newspapermen demand new wage board, DA

Journalists, press workers and general employees of newspapers and news agencies held a joint rally yesterday demanding formation of a new wage board and 60 per cent dearness allowance, reports BSS.

The largely attended rally on the National Press Club premises was organised by "Sangbadpatra-Sramik-Karmachari Oikya Parishad," a newly formed action committee of working journalists and other employees in news industry to press home their 9-point demand.

Sangbadpatra Hawkers Welfare Multipurpose Cooperative Society lent their support to and expressed solidarity with the just struggle of journalists and other workers of the industry.

Demanding two-day weekly See page 11 col 3

Arson at village in Daudkandi: Court frames charges against 26

COMILLA, Apr 30: The district and sessions judge court here today framed charges against 26 people, including Daudkandi pourasava chairman Nasir Uddin Ahmed, in the sensational case of arson at Satandandi village of the thana in 1994, reports UNB.

District and Sessions Judge Nazmun Nahar Sultana fixed May 2 for hearing of the case, said a press release of Comilla Ainjibi Samity.

According to the prosecution, a group of terrorists poured petrol on houses and burned the village in broad daylight on February 15, 1994.

Police submitted charge sheet against 62 people but the case remained postponed by order of the High Court on different occasions. Later, the case was sent to the District Judge's Court by the directive of the High Court.

The case was filed under the Terrorists Prevention Act during the BNP regime, and according to the provisions of that law the case would have to be disposed of within 30 days.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the then Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, visited the village after the barbaric incident and assured the villagers that the criminals would be brought to look if her party went to power.

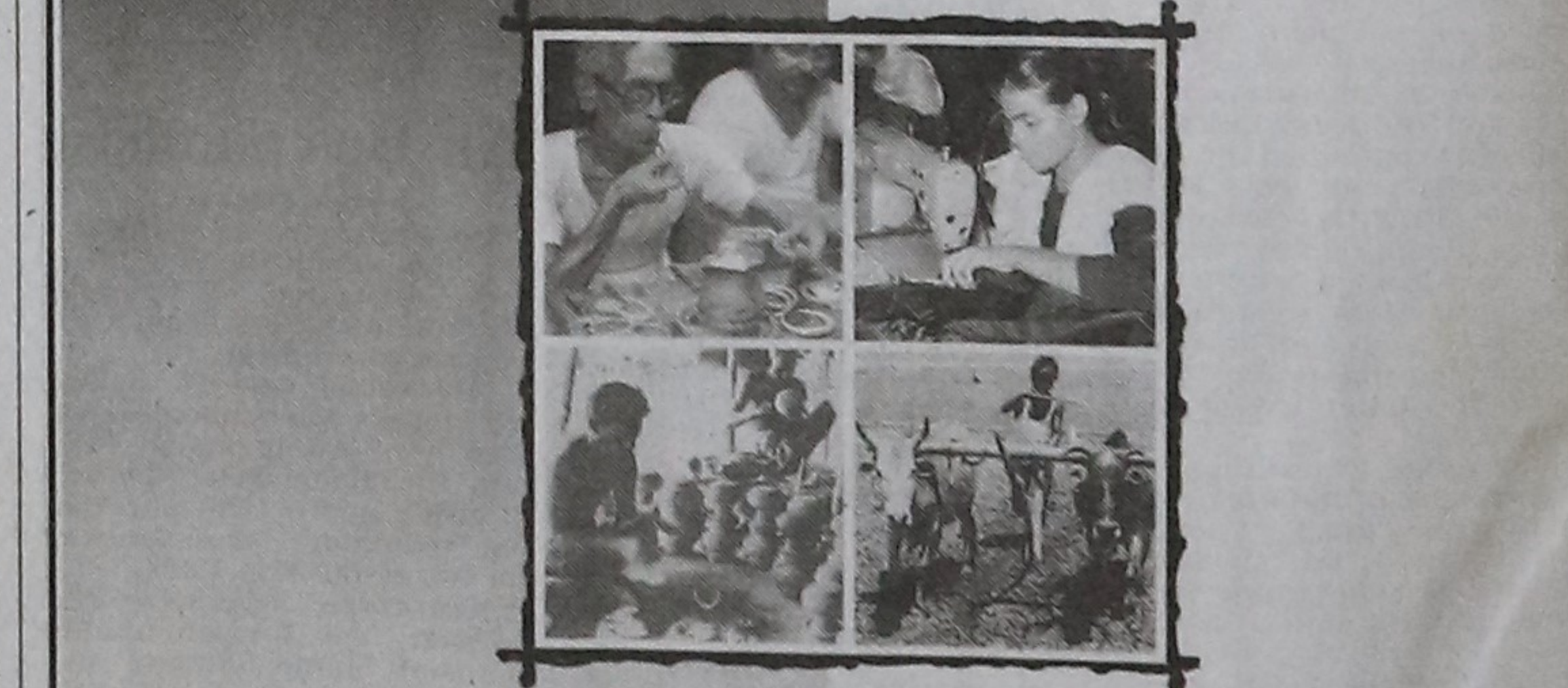
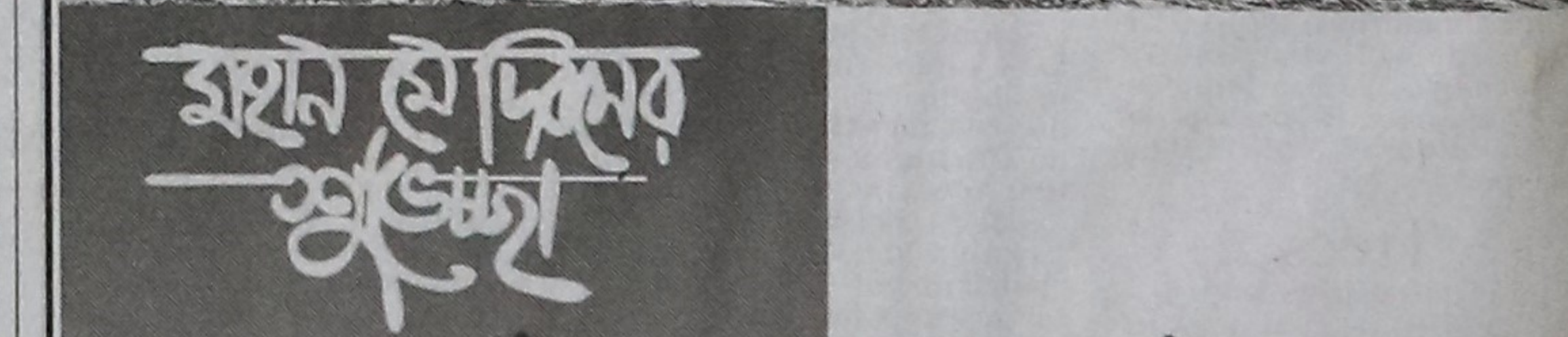
Businessman murder: Two held in N'ganj

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Apr 30: Bandar thana police today arrested two persons in connection with the killing of businessman Abdul Kader Jilani. The arrested were identified as Mamun, 28, and Shimul, 30. They are FIR-named accused in the case.

Jilani 26, a young businessman was stabbed to death by some extortionists on Saturday.

Rousan Ali, Jilani's elder brother filed a case with Bandar thana on Saturday accusing 11 people, including the arrested two.



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