

What's on today....

Annual conference: The annual conference and general meeting of Foundation for Research on Educational Planning and Development (FREPD) will be held. Venue: FREPD auditorium, Sonargaon Road. Time: 10:00 am.

Film show: Pedar Buzurg and Baccheha-e-Aseman, two Iranian films will be screened on the last day of a special screening for children and young adults. Venue: Iranian Cultural Centre auditorium, Rd No 7/A, Dhanmondi. Time: 4:45 pm-8:30 pm.

CESTI seminar: Centre for Scientific and Technological Information (CESTI) of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka will hold a seminar on "The role of the sacred and the religious in intercultural negotiations: The case of Arab states." Venue: Alliance Francaise premises. Time: 8:00 pm.

Film show: Two German comedies *Rosini* and *No more Mister Nice Guy* will be screened. Venue: Goethe Institut, House No. 10, Road No 9, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 5:30 pm.

DUPDAA election: The election and general meeting at Dhaka University Political Science Department Alumni Association (DUPDAA) will be held. Venue: Jatiya Press Club auditorium. Time: 2:00 pm.

..... and tomorrow

Exhibition: A three-day long exhibition of pictures of Islamic and Iranian architecture will begin on occasion of International Cultural Heritage and Archeological Day. Venue: Iranian Cultural Centre, Road No 8/A, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 10:00 am-10:00 pm and 3:00 pm-7:00 pm.

Folk art exhibition: A month-long exhibition on traditional and folk art and crafts will be inaugurated. Chief guest: State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed. Venue: National Museum, Shahbagh. Time: 5:30 pm.

Iranian film show: Zahir Raihan Film Society will screen *The Sultors* by Ghassem Ibrahimian and *The children of Heaven* by Majid Majidi on the fourth day of the special film screening session. Venue: Goethe Institut, House No 10, Road No 9, Dhanmondi R/A. Time 5:00 pm and 6:30 pm.

CESTI seminar: Centre for Scientific Technological Information (CESTI) of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka will hold a seminar on "The French Cultural Perception: Between Universalism and Globalism". Venue: Alliance Francaise premises, 26 Mirpur Road. Time: 8:00 pm.

Weather

Rain likely

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at many places over Chittagong, Dhaka, Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions and at a few places over Khulna and Barisal divisions during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

The day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met office said.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 36.7 degree Celsius was recorded at Jessore and the lowest of 20.5 degree Celsius at Mymensingh.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:37 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:13 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
Dhaka	29.9	21.6
Chittagong	32.2	23.3
Rajshahi	33.4	26.6
Khulna	35.5	28.1
Barisal	32.4	25.3
Sylhet	27.8	22.6
Cox's Bazar	33.2	--

HERE and THERE

Muktijoddha Smriti

Songrakkhan Sangsad

Bangladesh Muktijoddha Smriti Songrakkhan Sangsad (BMSSS) yesterday expressed its firm determination to maintain people's unity against the four-party anti-liberation alliance, reports BSS.

They took the vow while speaking at a discussion to observe the fourth death anniversary of freedom fighter Fakrul Islam Chowdhury.

Held in the auditorium of Dhanmondi Library in the capital, the meeting was presided over by senior Vice-President of the Sangsad Shashanka Bhushan Majumder.

The speakers recalled the contribution of Chowdhury who was the founding chairman of the Sangsad for the freedom fighters.

They excoriated Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Ghulam Azam for raising slogans for the revival

of the spirit of the two-nation theory, saying people have long buried the two-nation theory of 1947 and embraced secularism as a state principle after earning independence from Pakistan in 1971 through a nine-month war.

They demanded of the concerned authorities to expedite the trial process in the Bangladesh killing case.

They also urged the government to bring to justice those who had killed three million people and inflicted blinding torture and sufferings on scores of peace-loving people during the Liberation War as local agents and collaborators of the Pakistani occupation forces.

Among others, Shamsuddin Selim, Ibne Aziz Chowdhury, Mohammad Anis Ahmed, Advocate Mahtab Uddin Ahmed, Miyan Shahjahan Sarkar, Alsui Miyan Chowdhury and Ariful Haque Chowdhury also spoke on the occasion.

Bangladesh-EU accord on trade, investment on Monday

Commerce Minister M Abdul Jalil left Dhaka yesterday for Brussels to sign an agreement between Bangladesh and European Union, reports UNB.

The cooperation agreement will be signed on Monday (May 22) to increase trade and investment between Bangladesh and EU.

The minister is leading a three-member Bangladesh team. Other members of the team are: Bangladesh Ambassador in Brussels and Joint Secretary of the Economic Relations Division.

The Commerce Minister will also meet the EU Trade Commissioner and Development Affairs Commissioner and urge them to expand preferential market access for Bangladesh to increase its export.

Jalil is expected to return home on May 27.

BDR protests intrusion of Indians into enclave

KURIGRAM, May 19: Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) today officially protested intrusion of Indian citizens backed by Border Security Force (BSF) of India into the Bangladesh enclave — Mashaldanga — here yesterday, reports BSS.

"We are waiting for the positive reply to the second letter that we sent today to BSF proposing holding of a flag meeting," BDR Rangpur Sector Commander Colonel Shakil told the news agency this evening. He also expressed the hope that the situation would come normal by next two or three days.

Several hundreds of Indians, backed by BSF personnel, invaded the Bangladesh enclave of Mashaldanga under Burungamari of the district yesterday. They abducted four Bangladesh nationals, set fire to 55 houses and looted valuables and cattle. More than 10 women and children were injured during the attack, officials said.

Shantu Larma

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This will be the first openly in the city to be addressed by the chief of the Jana Sanghati Samity, the political wing of the former guerrilla outfit Shantibahini.

During his stay in Dhaka, Larma is also scheduled to have discussion with the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on the progress of the implementation of the peace accord that both sides signed over two years ago, ending two decades of insurgency at Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

Larma will formally inaugurate that 11th founding anniversary programme and the 9th council of the Pahari Chhatra Parishad (PCP) or Hill Students Council in front of Aparajeyo Bangla on the Dhaka University campus at 10 this morning.

The 5th central council session of the PCP will be held May 21-23 at Teachers-Students Centre (TSC) of Dhaka University.

A PCP press release issued yesterday said, its council would highlight the burning issues like withdrawal of army camp from the CHT, resettlement of refugees and internally displaced persons and full implementation of the CHT peace accord.

PCP will hold a discussion in the afternoon at ICMA Auditorium and a cultural evening to be presented by tribal artists.

Among others, Shamsuddin Selim, Ibne Aziz Chowdhury, Mohammad Anis Ahmed, Advocate Mahtab Uddin Ahmed, Miyan Shahjahan Sarkar, Alsui Miyan Chowdhury and Ariful Haque Chowdhury also spoke on the occasion.

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Gano Forum leader Dr Kamal Hossain addressing a press conference held at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday to mark the launching of 'Nagorik Samaj', a civil rights group.

— Star photo



Barrister Mainul Hussain presented a crest to litterateur Prof Shahed Ali at reception ceremony held at the National Press Club yesterday. Prof Shahed was accorded a reception for his contribution in the field of Bangla literature.

— Star photo

Govt to plant CEC

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deep rooted conspiracy centring the voters' list.

He called upon the people and opposition activists to guard against the ruling Awami League's 'evil move to include fake voters and drop eligible voters from the list'.

Alleging that the government is out to break unity of the opposition alliance, he said, "It is unity of the people that exists now, it will continue during the national elections and also after that. This unity will last even if any one deserts the alliance."

The BNP secretary general said the government has borrowed over Tk 5000 crore from different commercial banks to give salary to public servants and the banks are now facing liquidity crisis. The government will have to declare itself 'defaulter' if drawing of loans from banks continues, he added.

Mannan Bhuiyan asked public servants to maintain neutrality and not to carry out any illegal order of the ruling party.

Referring to the coming parliament session, he said the opposition has no scope to return to parliament as the ruling party has turned it into its 'party office'.

"Parliament session is now meaningless because the government has made it completely ineffective," he said and

called for dissolution of parliament and handover of power to a caretaker government.

Bhuiyan put forward two suggestions to the government and asked it to implement those immediately 'in its own interest'. The suggestions are renovation of all jails in the country and repeal of the Public Safety Act and the Special Power Act.

"You (AL) should renovate the prisons because you are to go there on charges of murder, corruption and other criminal offences," he said.

BNP Standing Committee member Abdul Matin Chowdhury in his speech apprehended that AL leaders and activists would quit the country and take shelter in a neighbouring country as soon as a caretaker government over.

The meeting was also addressed by, among others, Moudud Ahmed, Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf MP, Dr Abdul Moeen Khan MP, Sadek Hossain, Khoka MP, Mosharrat Hossain MP, Rezaul Karim MP, Roknuddin Mollah, Ataur Rahman Angur, Khairul Kabir Khokon, Fazlul Haq Milon and Shirajul Islam.

At the conference, a 101-member thana BNP committee was announced and Advocate Rafiqul Hasan and Shamsuzzaman were elected President and General Secretary respectively for the next two years.

Training workshop on astronomy

Bangladesh Astronomical Association in cooperation with CESTI of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka will hold a 10-day long primary astronomy training workshop starting from May 22, says a press release.

Schoolboy

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Bayazid was the son of Abu Jafar M Saleh of Billa village at Agalghara in Barisal district. The body was sent to DMCH for autopsy on Thursday. A case was filed with Ramna police.

"The boy died of assault injury," said a source quoting the autopsy report.

When Rakibul Islam, the victim's uncle, came to the DMCH morgue, he came to know that beating by students caused Bayazid's death.

Ramna police said the boy died early morning Thursday but teachers of the institution informed police at about 4 pm on that day.

Joynal Abedin, a teacher of the institution filed an unnatural death case in this regard. In the FIR it was stated that Bayazid was suffering from nasal problem for about one and half years and oozing of blood caused his death.

Police said they are waiting for the autopsy report. If the report says the death is from torture, a murder case will be filed, police said.

Independence of judiciary should be protected

Speakers at Shoto Nagarik Committee seminar say

By Staff Correspondent

Speakers at a seminar yesterday criticised the government for bringing out the stick procession, saying that it is a threat to the independence of judiciary.

They said that the independence of judiciary should be protected as it protects fundamental rights of the people.

They were addressing a seminar at National Press Club yesterday on "Independence of judiciary at stake and the rule of law" organised by Shoto Nagarik Committee (SNC), an organisation of one hundred leading civil society members.

Presided over by convener of SNC Prof Emajuddin Ahmed, the seminar was addressed, among others, by Barrister

Mainul Hussain, Barrister Moudud Ahmed, Dr Mahub Ullah and Abu Hena, MP.

Prof Emajuddin Ahmed said that independence of judiciary should be protected to strengthen democracy in the country.

Referring to a Transparency International report, he said higher courts that include Supreme Court and High Court are delivering judgements without interference whereas in lower courts, the situation is not the same.

He said that the way abusive language was being used and the mud slinging taking place in parliament was very painful.

Referring to the stick procession against judges recently, Ahmed also said that these are symptoms of an unhealthy situation. "These are signs of ailment," he added.

Barrister Mainul Hussain said that even those who fought during the Pakistan era to establish democracy, had unfortunately destroyed it after the independence.

Referring to joining of professors, journalists and intellectuals in BAKSAL in 1974, he asked why educated people made mistakes by joining BAKSAL.

Barrister Moudud Ahmed said that Awami League does not believe in democracy and independence of judiciary. Bringing out stick procession against judges by the ministers proves this, he added.

Describing the government as 'weak', he said the real character of Awami League has been exposed again through this procession.

Extortion: 3 policemen closed in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, May 19: Three policemen were closed on charges of toll collection from the vendors at Jamal Khan Road here this evening, reports BSS.

According to Kotwali police, three policemen on duty in the area were caught red-handed by the local people while collecting tolls from the vendors.

On receipt of information, Officer-in-Charge of Kotwali thana rushed to the spot and closed them.

The process for temporary suspension of the trio — Altaf, Lebn Mia and Jahangir — was on, police sources said.

Biman's F-28

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chased in late 1998 from an Indonesian domestic airline. These are of 1978 and 1979 vintage.

The aircraft were bought with the insurance money of five million dollars against Biman's F-28 aircraft that could not be salvaged after a crash landing on a wetland near Sylhet Osmani Airport on December 22, 1997.

After purchase of the two aircraft, these were pressed into service last year in domestic and regional routes. But the two aircraft became a problem in Biman's fleet. Fault in hydraulic system often developed. There have been recent instances when one of the aircraft was stuck up at Syedpur and another aborted take-off due to trouble in hydraulic system.

As a result, Biman had to suffer losses due to missing flights and delays and repairs.

Baby leopard

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of the big cat family.

The baby leopard was kept in a small cage normally used for pet birds and hidden under a cot in the house, police said.

Acting on a tip-off, police raided the house and recovered the animal.

When contacted, the alleged poachers said that they purchased it at Tk 1600 and had a deal to sell it for Tk. 150,000.

It was suspected that the baby leopard was either trapped in hills in Sylhet region or smuggled from north-east India.

Its destination was nearby Katabon, where a flourishing trade on illegally trapped animals, birds and aquarium fish is going on for long, it was learnt.

A case has been filed against the arrested persons.

Computer virus

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tious." Investigators suspect the "Love Bug" originated in the Philippines, where several people have been questioned. The relatively simple virus was followed some hours later by copycat viruses posing as jokes or confirmations on Mother's Day gifts. None of those variants were very widespread. Microsoft has said it will make available a modification to Outlook next week that will warn users about suspect e-mail attachments.

Fiji

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vised him they may not be able to cope.

Speight said the ethnic Fijian-dominated armed forces "are passive but remain at the beck and call and the control of the civilian government that is in place at this time that is headed by myself."

He also said Chaudhury and his supporters were safe in the parliament building.

Head of state Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara declared a state of emergency, giving himself power to command the military, and appealed to the hostage takers to release the lawmakers. He also urged the army and police to restore the rule of law.

"I regret to say what is happening today is not in accordance with the constitution and is therefore unlawful," Ratu Mara said.

Ratu Mara's daughter, Adi Kola Mara, was among ministers being held.

The failure of Fiji's police and army to try to put down the rebels may command widespread support from native Fijians.

But analysts said Speight had little support.

Cannes jury to decide between war and peace, east and west, past and present

CANNES, France, May 19: With no clear favourite emerging among the 23 contenders for the Golden Palm at Cannes 2000, the jury heading for the hills at the weekend is going to have a hard time deciding how to share out the rewards between East and West, reports.

Asia has fielded a particularly strong line-up this year -- eight films, if the Israeli entry is included -- and the panel headed by Luc Besson, gathering amid the customary secrecy in a villa far from the bustle of the festival, will be strongly tempted to look eastwards.

Among the films that have impressed critics and public alike are Jiang Wen's audacious tragic-comedy "Guizi Lai Le" (Devils on the Doorstep) about the Sino-Japanese war, Edward Yang's reflective middle class drama from Taiwan "Yi Yi", and the first ever South Korean entry in competition, Im Kwon Taek's "Chunhyang".

Few would argue with an award for the Iranian prodigy Samira Makhmalbaf who, just 20, presented the astonishingly mature "Blackboards", while the Israeli Amos Gitai's verite-style "Kippur" left lingering, visceral images of war.

The war theme was recurrent in the Asian entries, either directly or obliquely, and lent them a weight and sobriety that the western contenders often lacked.

Lars Von Trier's "Dancer in the Dark" starring the Icelandic singer Bjork was a crowd-pleaser that left critics sharply divided, many complaining of being manipulated by the Danish director's blend of musical and jail-house weepie.

Another Cannes favourite

who has so far missed out on the top award, Britain's Ken Loach, is well in the running with "Bread and Roses", as militant as ever but warmer than much of his recent work, while Pavel Loungoune's "La Noce" (The Wedding), may find support for its finely-judged account of life in a Russian village still finding its way between its Communist past and an uncertain future.

The three US entries screened so far, comedies by the former Palm-winners Joel and Ethan Coen, newcomer Amos Kollek and the usually acerbic Neil LaBute, delivered laughs in good measure but were generally found light-weight and unadventurous.

Several competition entries looked to the past for inspiration, foremost among them the French, and Olivier Assayas drew an enthusiastic response for his historic romance "Les Destinées Sentimentales" (Sentimental Destinies).

If the jury should take the arthouse route, Liv Ullmann's intense, Bergman-scripted "Faithless" could get the nod, as could Aoyama Shinji's austere road-movie "Eureka".

The ways of festival juries are passing strange, and much depends on how the jury president -- in the present case, the most US-influenced of French directors -- deals with his colleagues.

Adding to the uncertainty is the presence of three strong contenders waiting for Saturday screenings, notably Wong Kar-Wai's "In the Mood for Love".

Last year the winner emerged from left-field, the little known Dardenne brothers taking the

award with the bleak, working-class drama "Rosetta" screened on the last day, while in 1998 too Theo Angelopoulos's "Eternity and a Day", though widely seen as a likely winner, was a last-day screening.

Whatever decision the jury comes to, the true winner at Cannes in the eyes of many reporters was a film presented out of competition, Ang Lee's martial arts costume drama "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon", an exhilarating blend of action movie and high culture that brought a much-needed dash of old-style Hollywood magic to the Croisette.

As for rewarding individual performances, the judges will have plenty of choice among the actresses, with notable performances by the ultra-professional Lena Endre in "Faithless" and by the non-professional Bjork in "Dancer in the Dark", while Renee Zellweger in "Nurse Betty" and Emmanuelle Beart in "Les Destinées Sentimentales" may also fancy their chances.

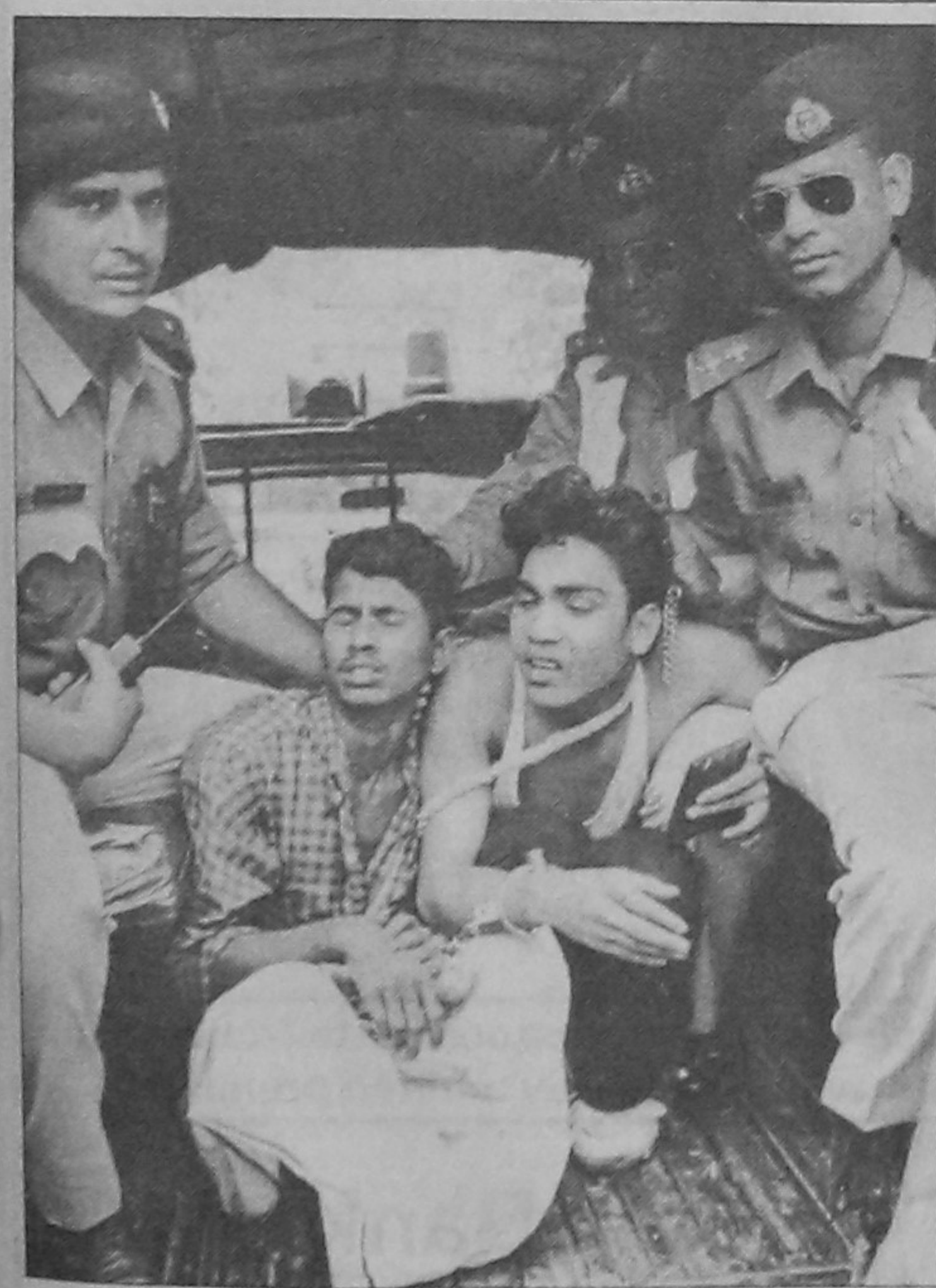
Strong male roles were fewer, but Yakusho Koji in "Eureka" at times resembled an Asian Marcello Mastroianni, while Sergi Lopez made the most of his role in Dominick Moll's psychological drama "Harry, Un ami qui vous veut du bien" (Harry, He's here to help).

And depending on whatever East-West balance the jury finally decides on, they could reward Wu Nianzhen for his restrained performance in "Yi Yi" or make a bare-faced pitch for Hollywood glamour by going for the star of Joel and Ethan Coen's "O Brother, Where art thou?", matinee idol George Clooney.



US actress Linda Evans poses upon her arrival at the AMFAR (American Foundation for Aids Research) benefit party during the 53rd Cannes Film festival, on the French Riviera.

—AFP photo



Police nabbed two young men from Kakrail area in the city yesterday and recovered bombs from their possession.

— Star photo