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Joint exercise of 3 services likely this winter

By Defence Correspondent

The Army Headquarters is contemplating a joint exercise of the three services this winter, sources said.

The Joint Exercise would be held with large scale participation of officers and troops from the Army, Navy and Air Force. Most of the battle exercises will be based on 'simulation and assumption'. While executing the operational plan, it would consider the largest neighbour as the 'potential target threat'.

All the seven divisions of the Army and different components like Infantry, Artillery, Armour and supporting corps would participate in the joint exercise. Navy ships and gunboats and Air Force jets would also take part in the exercise mobilising the entire military potential of the country.

The sources said the plan for joint exercise initiated at the highest level in the Army will be discussed in detail with the chiefs of other services before it is forwarded for approval of the Prime Minister, who also holds charge of the Defence Ministry.

The last joint military exercise named Iron Shield was conducted in February 1981 at the desire of the then president Ziaur Rahman. The proposed exercise is likely to be named Iron Shield 2.

Opposition to call hartal Oct 2

By Staff Correspondent

In a reversal of previous decision, the four-party opposition alliance has decided to call a countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal on October 2 to protest abduction of Laxmipur district BNP leader Nurul Islam.

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia is scheduled to announce the shutdown programme at a joint public meeting of the alliance at Mymensingh this afternoon.

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad, Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Golam Azam and Islami Oikya Jote Chairman Azizul Haq will also address the meeting to be held at Mymensingh Circuit House ground at 2 pm today.

The decision to call hartal was taken at a meeting of the Central Liaison Committee

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JP (Ershad) forms body to select polls candidates

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad yesterday formed a 25-member committee to prepare a list of prospective party candidates for the 2001 parliamentary elections.

JP (Ershad) Secretary General Nazim Rahman has been made Chief Coordinator of the committee and Joint Secretary General Moidul Islam member-secretary, a party press release said.

The committee will also prepare a list of aspirants from other parties. The lists will be submitted to the JP Parliamentary Board, the press release added.

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Thousands marooned in 5 districts: Army called out

By Staff Correspondent

Army was called out to evacuate marooned people as the flood situation deteriorated in Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj, Kushtia, Chuadanga and Meherpur districts yesterday due to rise in water levels in major rivers following onrush of water from across the border.

Thousands of people have been marooned, according to reports from our correspondents and news agencies.

The worst affected district is Chuadanga. Some 50 villages in eight unions of the district have been submerged by flood waters as three embankments at Ghoria, Putimari and Hatishala in Nadia district of India col-

lapsed. Of the total, 21 villages in Damurhuda, Alamdanga and Sadar upazilas went under three to four feet water, damaging several thousand thatched houses and 12 BDR camps.

Over 100 army men with eight water vessels and relief materials from Jessore reached Chuadanga yesterday.

They would also help the local administration in relief operations.

Four people died in Chuadanga in house collapse. They are Thandu, 42, of Chakulia village, Polly, 6, and Bobby, 7, of Munshipur village

and Golam Mondal, 65, of Zuranpur village in Damurhuda.

Our Rajshahi Correspondent reports: The overall flood situation in Rajshahi and Chapainawabganj districts has worsened with rise in water level in the rivers Padma and Mohananda.

Fresh areas in Godagari and Paba upazilas of Rajshahi have been inundated.

A vast areas of Godagari upazila has been inundated following collapse of Vagail Flood Control Embankment. Flood water also entered some

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Dhaka will respond to any UN call for peacekeeping: PM



Sheikh Hasina

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said Bangladesh would respond to any UN call for peacekeeping operations in any country, reports BSS.

"Bangladesh has been always responding to the call of peacekeeping operations with total respect as peace is one of her main principles of foreign policy," she said while inaugurating a six-day seminar on South Asia Peace Keeping Operations Gaming yesterday at Sonargaon Hotel.

She said the end of the Cold War has brought about qualitative changes in the international politics and created newer conflicts. "But today the peacekeeping operations have gained multiple dimensions,"

she said. Sheikh Hasina said the symbol of peacekeeping "The Blue Helmets" have been contributing to resolving civil wars, ethnic cleansing, secessions, tribal struggles, ensuring return of refugees and security of women, children and civilians and other humanitarian activities.

The prime minister observed that proper training and preparedness have assumed highest consideration before deployment of troops in troubled areas.

Mentioning the setting up of a Peacekeeping Operation Training Centre in Dhaka, she expressed the hope that the

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'Possible' gas reserve doesn't mean 'proven' reserve

USGS team due today to remove confusion

By Staff Correspondent

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) agrees with Petrobangla that 'possible' gas reserve can not be considered as 'proven' gas reserve, sources said quoting the government's energy experts who recently

took part in a USGS programme in the United States.

The sources believe that the agreement of opinion will help remove much of the confusions over Bangladesh's reserve of gas and its utilisation.

Reciprocating the visit of Bangladesh experts, a USGS team, headed by Bob Millich, is due in the city today to hold a three-day workshop beginning Tuesday on the gas sector and

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Nirmul body procession intercepted

By Staff Correspondent

A procession of Ekatturer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee was intercepted by police as it was going towards the Pakistani High Commission here to submit a memorandum.

The memorandum was to be submitted to protest the 'false remarks' relating to Bangladesh's Liberation War by Pakistani military ruler Gen. Pervez Musharraf.

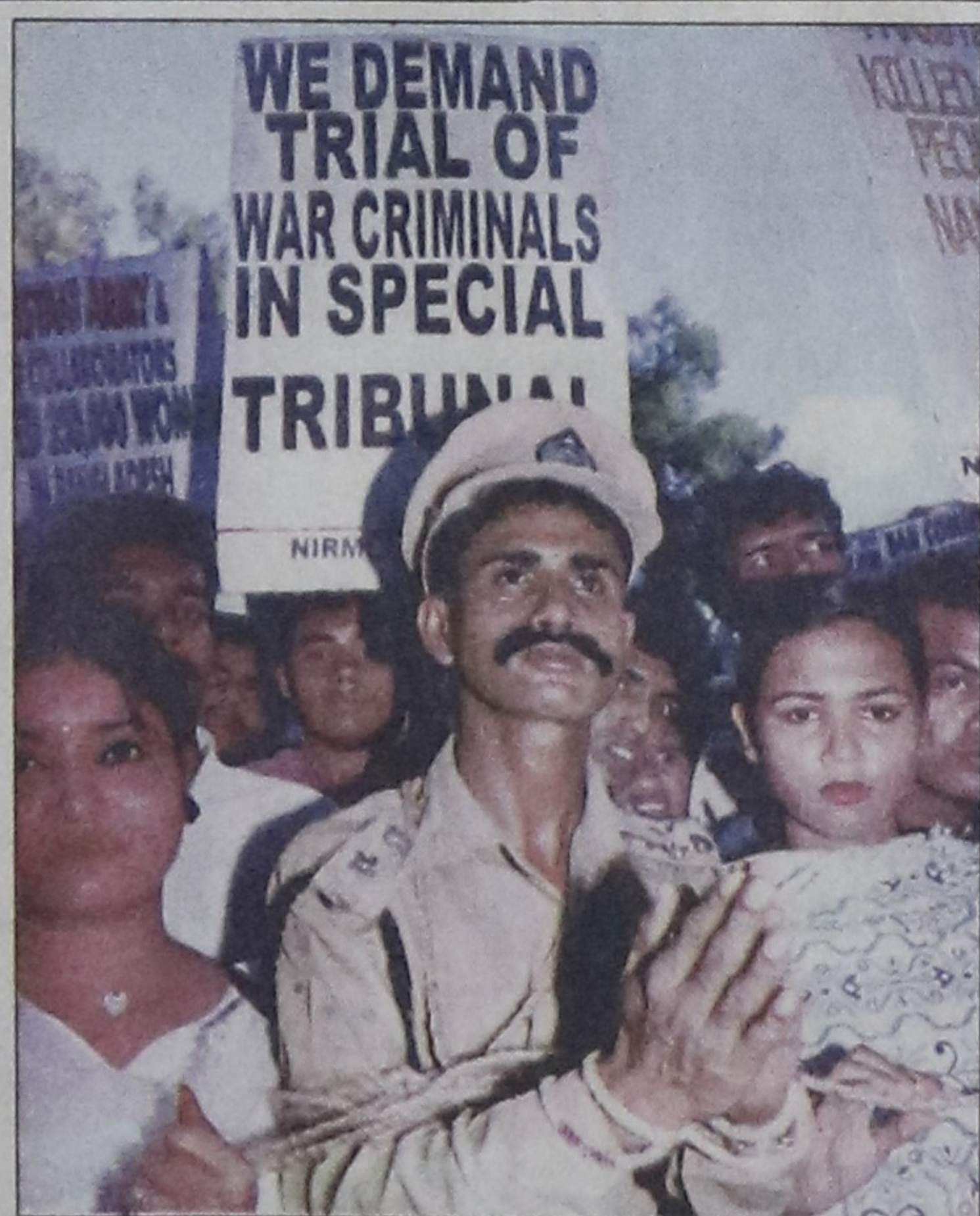
Being intercepted at Banani Bazar, the committee held a rally there.

Among others, Convener of the committee Syed Hassan Imam and its Member Secretary Prof. Abdul Mannan Chowdhury addressed the rally, presided over by its Vice-President Muntasir Mamun. Kazi Mukul, General Secretary of the committee, read out a written speech of National Professor Kabir Chowdhury.

The speakers said, even after 30 years, Pakistani rulers are hiding the war crimes done by occupation forces during the Liberation War.

They reiterated their demands for Pakistan's unconditional apology for the war crimes and ban on activities of Pakistani intelligence agency ISI in Bangladesh.

They also demanded trial of war criminals and collaborators of '71. World opinion is also in favour of trial of war criminals, they added.



Members of Ekatturer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee (Committee for elimination of killers and collaborators of '71) marched to Pakistan High Commission yesterday demanding apology by Pakistan for war crimes committed by Pakistan Army in 1971 and trial of war criminals in special tribunal. Picture shows a Committee member impersonating a Pakistani soldier asking for forgiveness for crimes on humanity.

— Star photo

Fraud in rice import unearthed

A parliamentary probe body unearthed a fraud in rice import and found the report of a missing ship carrying the consignment to be false, reports UNB.

On the basis of findings of its sub-committee formed for the inquiry, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Food Ministry yesterday recommended 'stern action' against the fraudulent suppliers and ministry officials concerned.

"It was nothing but a high drama," said one of the mem-

bers of the JS body, referring to its stark findings about the mysterious disappearance of the ship, MV Hafina, on way from India to Chittagong seaport.

"There is no ship named MV Hafina anywhere in the world," the sub-committee revealed. The probe committee, which also found the exporting firm spurious, blamed negligence of some top officials of the ministry for this misdeed.

MV Hafina with 12,000 metric tons of rice reportedly dis-

appeared on its way to Chittagong port in November 1998. Reports said the Ministry of Food had purchased the rice from an Indian firm, Ramesh Kumar and Co, through an international tender.

The sub-committee during its investigation revealed that no such company exists and the local agents have also been hiding since then.

Headed by Mirza Azam MP, the sub-committee was formed to probe into the incidents of

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Opposition's jt rally at Mymensingh today

By staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance will hold a joint public meeting at Mymensingh Circuit House ground at 2 pm today.

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia will address the meeting as chief guest and announce the next course of action programme.

Mymensingh district until of All-Party Action Council (APAC) will organise the rally as part of opposition's mass campaign against the Awami League government. Earlier, the alliance held similar joint meetings in Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Khulna.

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad, Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Golam Azam and Islami Oikya Jote Chairman Azizul Haq will address the rally as special guests.

Opposition sources said the parties have completed all preparations to make today's meeting a success.

They said leaders and activists of four opposition parties from Tangail, Jamalpur, Sherpur, Kishoreganj, Netrokona and Mymensingh are expected to attend the rally.

The opposition alliance is also planning to hold joint public meetings at Dinajpur, Comilla, Sylhet, Noakhali, Barisal and Faridpur district headquarters.

Polls in Chandpur Municipality today

From Our Correspondent CHANDPUR, Sept 24: Election in Chandpur Municipality will be held tomorrow.

The total number of voters in Chandpur Municipality is 45,672.

Four candidates are vying for the post of chairman. 74 for 15 posts of ward commissioners and 26 for five reserved seats for women.

Although the 104 candidates do not belong to any political party, the 4 chairman candidates have blessings of the major parties.

Md Shafiqur Rahman Bhuiyan is backed by the main opposition BNP and the remaining three -- Md Yousuf Gazi, Abu Naim Patwari and Ahsanullah Akhand -- have the blessings of the ruling Awami League.

Polling will begin at 8 am and continue till 4 pm without any break.

According to District Election Commission office sources

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State Minister's reaction to Daily Star story

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, in his reaction on a news item headlined "Govt finally going to allow TU activities in EPZs" published in The Daily Star yesterday, said that the news item would create confusion about the situation.

The state minister said, "As has been reported earlier, the Prime Minister raised the issue of GSP with President Clinton during the Millennium Summit. It was obvious that the matter received serious consideration of President Clinton."

This was communicated to me by Bruce Riedel, special assistant to President Clinton. I also commended the excellent contribution made by Sajib Wajed when they met Rosenbaum on September 13."

Continuing Abul Hasan said, "I feel that it is the duty of every citizen of Bangladesh to work for the country and Sajib Wajed's performance was very helpful in the negotiation process."

"Subsequently on September 15, I met my counterpart Susan Esserman as well as Rosenbaum."

"Both Bangladesh and the

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Two held from Ctg BNP office with huge explosives

From Our Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Sept 24: Two persons were arrested with huge quantity of explosives from Chittagong City BNP office premises in the city today.

DB Police in a predawn raid arrested them from the ground floor of the building.

The arrested identified as Md Ziaul Haq, 25, and Ali Hossen alias Ali, 26, were accused in Abdul Rahman (Rauji) Killing Case.

Meanwhile, Bayezid thana police in a raid arrested one Md Ismail -- an absconding accused in three criminal cases -- from Sherahah Colony last night.



Sergey Kliugin of Russia clears the bar yesterday in the men's high jump final of the Sydney Olympic Games. World record holder Javier Sotomayor's controversial comeback ended in heartbreak as Kliugin sneaked the Olympic high jump gold.

— AFP photo

Rain dampens Games spirit

SYDNEY, Sept 24: Favourites faltered in the rain at the Sydney Olympics today as a sudden downpour washed away the gold medal hopes of most of the major contenders on the third day of athletics competition, reports Reuters.

Russian gymnast and part time model Svetlana Khorkina finally managed a gold medal and a smile, in that order, after a string of disappointments.

In Stadium Australia, Kliugin took advantage of the unpredictable weather conditions

to clear 2.35 metres in the high jump, his best height of the season, before the downpour.

His six other rivals, including world record holder Javier Sotomayor of Cuba, who had all cleared 2.32, splashed out as

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Bangladesh Television will telecast live various events of Sydney Olympics from 10 am everyday from today, reports UNB.

The star names had flourished on Saturday with Maurice Greene and Marion Jones waltzing off with the prestigious sprint titles but Sunday belonged to some less illustrious performers, such as Russian Sergei Kliugin and Tereza Marinova of Bulgaria.

With no track finals on the programme, the day's glamour was to be found indoors, where

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Freak deals by 2 DSE brokers cause huge loss to investors

By M Shamsur Rahman

Freak deals by two brokers at the Dhaka Stock Exchange, claimed to have been done by mistake, yesterday saw Chittagong Cement shares soaring high with astronomical amount of shares being purchased and sold.

But at the end, both the

dealers admitted their 'errors' and reversed the whole deal for about Tk 39 crore both way, a record amount for any particular scrip.

However, investors who were unaware of such 'mistakes' and deal swapping, could know nothing of the day's drama.

They either made huge profits or sustained losses in their deals on shares of Chittagong Cement.

The wrong order by the brokers, caused by errors, also prompted the capital market regulators to summon the

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