

News

Hundreds of huts flattened as storm hits West Bengal

CALCUTTA, Oct 28: Hundreds of huts were flattened after a storm slammed into the eastern Indian state of West Bengal today bringing heavy rains, a state minister said, reports AFP.

West Bengal Finance Minister Asim Dasgupta said the storm with winds gusting up to 75 km per hour had hit the Sagar Islands off West Bengal's coast before blowing in a northeasterly direction towards neighbouring Bangladesh.

"Roughly 250 huts have been razed to the ground by high-speed winds in the coastal belt. The worst destruction has taken place in North-24 Parganas where 115 mud huts have been flattened. Despite the damage, there are no casualties," said Dasgupta.

"We had taken the precaution of evacuating people living along the coastal districts after a depression formed in the Bay of Bengal off Calcutta. And that safety measure has limited the fall-outs," he added.

Dasgupta said an alert

sounded earlier today in the coastal and low-lying areas of South 24-Parganas, North-24 Parganas, Calcutta, Howrah, Nadia and Midnapore districts would remain for the next 24 hours.

A red alert was also sounded at Calcutta's Hooghly Docks.

"We have reminded fishermen that it is not safe to venture out to sea and they should be careful till Sunday night," Dasgupta said.

Calcutta's meteorological office director R.N. Golder said the storm had caused the Hooghly river, which runs through Calcutta, to rise by 1.5 metres (4.9 feet). The city is protected by embankments.

A number of embankments at Patharpratima, Gosaba, Sagar Islands, Namkhana and Bakhal districts in West Bengal had also developed cracks with the storm dumping water in the swollen rivers.

Heavy monsoon floods in West Bengal have claimed more than 1,000 lives this year.

Adibashi students submit memo to RU VC

From RU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Oct 28: The Adibashi Students Association of Rajshahi University (ASARU) submitted a memorandum to the Vice-Chancellor (VC) today to press home their seven point demand.

The ASARU leaders handed over the memorandum to the VC Prof Sayeedur Rahman Khan at his office this morning. Their demands include reservation of three per cent seats in all departments, five per cent residence quota for Adibashi students, introduction of Adibashi language courses at the university and increasing scholarship quota for them.

The ASARU leaders submitted the memorandum on occasion of reunion, freshers' reception of Adibashi students and seminar on the campus today. They brought out a colourful procession as well.

Vice-Chancellor Prof Sayeedur Rahman Khan was present at the reunion and freshers' reception ceremony as chief guest while Prof M Wazed Ali was present as special guest.

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20 Palestinians

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Friday's confrontations lasted into the early hours of today as Palestinian gunmen fired on Gilo, a Jewish neighbourhood in southern Jerusalem. Nine Jewish apartments and a school building were damaged in what has become an almost nightly ritual of shooting from the adjacent Palestinian village of Beit Jalla on the West Bank.

Israeli soldiers initially fired machine guns at Beit Jalla, but later a helicopter cruised over the village and fired a missile. Tanks stationed in Gilo fired two shells, targeting suspected assailants, police said. There were no reports of injuries.

An Israeli missile tore a hole through the second floor of Jeries Kisla's upscale home around midnight, but all 21 people living there had left for a nearby community center several hours earlier when the shooting began.

Meanwhile in an interview in the Egyptian daily al-Ahram newspaper today, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat appeared to discount the prospect of renewed US mediation to end the clashes ahead of the November 7 presidential elections.

The American president, Bill Clinton, will remain busy until November 7, since we are in the final days of the American presidential campaign," Arafat told al-Ahram.

Clinton on Friday held out hope of holding separate White House meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Arafat the parties have been cool to the proposal but said the peace must first abate.

The bloodshed has raged on despite a cease-fire deal Clinton brokered in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh last week.

Meanwhile, BNP and Awami League workers clashed at Bhulai Hat of the union at about 1.30 pm leaving 10 people hit by bullet, including Jatiya Dal workers Majid, Kalam, Faruk, Shafi and Karim Mia.

Upazila BNP president Gias Uddin said a gang of terrorists coming out of the residence of Awami League leader Bhulai Mia opened fire on the BNP activists who were fleeing during the police raid.

Ismail Hossain was killed and 10 others were injured in the firing by ruling party terrorists, Gias said.

Awami League leaders said the clash erupted when BNP workers at tacked Bhulai Mia's residence.

The Additional Police Super and Sonagazi thana OC Abdul Wahid said they heard of the killing of a man at Bhulai Hat but were not sure about it.

District BNP president Mosharraf Hossain MP, accused

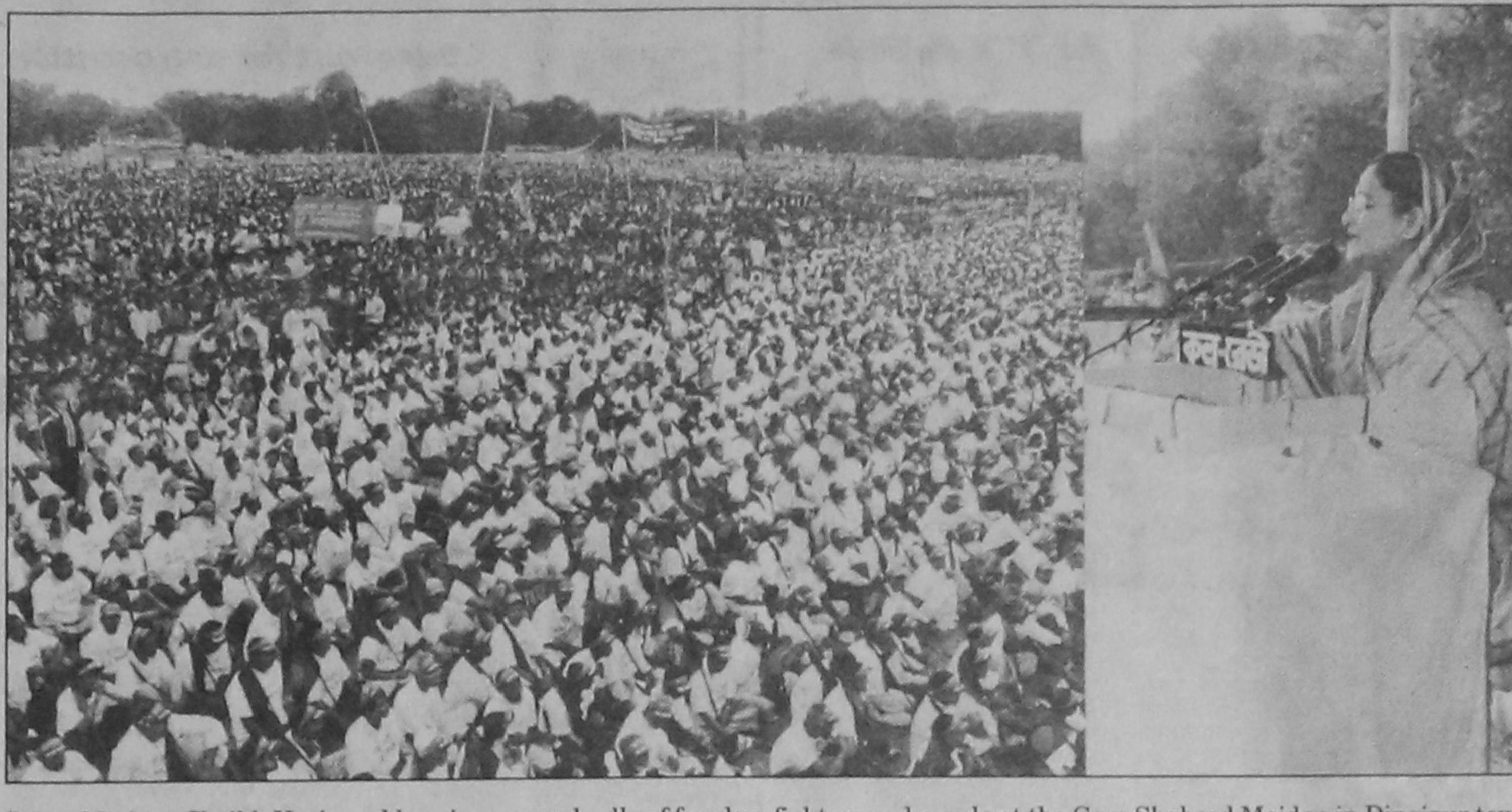
Interpol

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money laundering and gun control and is also familiar with police matters.

A former US assistant treasury secretary, Noble, rubbed shoulders with the secret service and also was involved in alcohol, arms and tobacco smuggling.

The new president is likely to be Spanish police chief Jesus Espigares-Mira who will succeed another policeman, Japan's Toshionori Kanemoto.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing a grand rally of freedom fighters and people at the Gora Shaheed Maidan in Dinajpur town

-PID photo

Resist conspiracy: PM

From page 1

As she reached the meeting venue at about 4 pm, freedom fighters gave her a 'guard of honour' while the National Anthem was played. A smiling Hasina waved to the people.

Presided over by State Minister Rouf Chowdhury, Convener of the Combined Freedom Fighters' Front, the rally was addressed by ministers, state ministers, MPs, cultural activists, freedom fighters and leaders of ruling Awami League's front organisations.

In an apparent election campaign, the Prime Minister strongly criticized the opposition, alleging that they were hatching conspiracy against the country and not working for its development.

"People will not vote for them who grabbed public money, snatched people's voting right and seized state power at gunpoint. Inshallah, people will take the right decision in the next election."

She said late president Ziaur Rahman, deposed President HM Ershad and former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia worked only to make fortune by grab-

bing public money.

She refuted the opposition's allegation that Awami League was selling out the country's sovereignty to another country. "Those who hoisted Indian national flag in a sovereign country can sell out the country to other nations."

"We have proved that those days are gone. Our relationship with other nations is friendly and on the basis of mutual partnership," Hasina said about the outcome of her meeting with US President Bill Clinton.

The grand rally was addressed among others, Prime Minister's Political Advisor Dr SA Malek, Forest and Environment Minister Sajeda Choudhury, Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed, Food Minister Amir Hossain Amu, Minister for Fisheries and Livestock ASM Abdur Rob, Health and Family Welfare Minister Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Awami League leader Advocate Abdul Rahim, State Minister for Primary and Mass Education Shafis Chandra Roy, Chief Whip Abu Hasnat Abdullah and State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed.

Later the Prime Minister inaugurated the 500-bed Dinajpur Medical College Hospital building.

She alleged that the opposition alliance was trying to mislead the people in the name of religion. She termed Khaleda, Ershad and Golam Azam as vote thief, autocrat and razakar respectively and said they can not do anything good for the people. They are looking only for their own interests, she said.

Listing her government's development activities, Sheikh Hasina said efforts would continue till a 'Golden Bengal' is established. Development activities will continue in the northern region also, she reiterated.

Referring to her recent visit to the United States, the Prime

Minister said, "Now we have our dignity." The three rulers after the 1975 changeover had exposed Bangladesh as a nation of beggars because they begged to other nations.

"Awami League along with people liberated the country and it can not sell the country. We will fight against any evil design. We are prepared to save our sovereignty even at the cost of blood," she said.

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City waterlogging

From page 1

remained without power from 2:30 pm till afternoon as uprooted roadside trees, broken branches and strong wind snapped power supply lines in different areas of the city.

Residents in some areas of the city complained that electronic goods were damaged due to fluctuation and frequent power disruption.

An official said last night that DESA stopped power supplying to some areas for several hours for safety reasons. Most parts of the city remained out of electricity till last evening.

When contacted at 6 pm yesterday, DESA control room said that they were supplying 450 megawatt of power which covers about 40 per cent of the city. "We are expecting to restore power in eighty per cent of the city area by late night."

Water remained stagnant for several hours during better part of the day, restricting normal movement of man and machine.

Rainwater remained stagnant at Malibagh, Mogbazar, Kathalgagan, Mirpur, Green Road, Bakshibazar and some other parts of the old city. Nazimuddin Road, DIT extension Road, Shantinagar, Bijoy Sarani, Manik Mina Avenue, Old Airport Road were the most affected.

Cases of sexual dysfunction were growing at a rate of 15 per cent each year, the newspaper said, blaming stress at work and within the family as well as environmental pollution.

BEIJING, Oct 28: Heavy pollution is contributing to soaring rates of impotence among men in China, the China Daily reported today.

Some 20-30 per cent of all adult men in a total population of 1.3 billion suffer from sexual problems, including impotence and sterility, the newspaper said without giving the source of its statistics.

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Filipino storm kills 8

MANILA, Oct 28: Eight people were confirmed dead and 19 people were missing as sea after tropical storm Xangsane slammed into the Philippines today, disaster monitoring agencies said, reports AFP.

City-dwellers suffered from water crisis as pumps could not operate due to absence of power.

Met office said that the situation is likely to improve today although there is a possibility of light rain for the next two days.

Two people including a pregnant woman were crushed by a falling tree while a man died in unknown circumstances in Sorsogon province, the National Disaster Coordinating Council said.

Another man drowned in Mauban town, Quezon province while one person died from extreme cold in the Bicol region east of Manila, the council added.

In addition, eight motorboats carrying 19 people were reported missing off the coast of Borongan town on the central island of Samar, the council said, adding that five patrol boats were dispatched to search for the motorboats.

A barge anchored off a Manila suburb, with at least six people aboard broke free from its moorings during the storm and ran aground on a sandbar with the six aboard still stranded inside, the coastguard said.

Seven people were rescued from a fishing boat that capsized off Cavite province near Manila, the coast guard added.

A top BSFIC official said, "The additional sugar in the market will not allow us to sell the local produce and payment to the farmers will be uncertain."

AL executive committee meets Nov 6

The meeting of the executive committee of Bangladesh Awami League will be held on November 6 at the prime minister's official residence of Ganabhaban.

President of Bangladesh Awami League and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will preside over the meeting, a party press release said.

General Secretary of Awami League and LGRD Minister Zillur Rahman has requested all members of the committee to attend the meeting on time.

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12 injured in Cox's Bazar clash

COX'S BAZAR, Oct 28: About a dozen people were injured in heavy firing and explosion of homemade bombs at Panbari road in the town at 8 tonight, reports UNB.

Police said quarrel between a member of a local club and BCL activists led to the firing and explosion of bombs from Panbari Square to Krishibazar.

The mayor also directed the officials of the City Corporation to remove all fallen trees from the road immediately.

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