



A policeman assaulting a picket with rifle butt in front of Pir Yemeni Market (right). Police also took position in front of AL office at Bangabandhu Avenue to prevent the party activists from bringing out procession during hartal hours yesterday.

### JS session prorogued

UNB, Dhaka

Maiden session of the 8th Parliament was prorogued yesterday after transacting business for 19 working days since October 28. Speaker Barrister Zamiruddin Sircar read out the prorogation order of President A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury at the end of day's business at 4:17 pm. Five bills including the Father of the Nation Family-members Security (Repeal) Bill, 2001 and Bangladesh (Freedom Fighters) Welfare Trust (Amendment) Bill, 2001 were passed in parliament. The main opposition Awami League boycotted the entire session on plea that October 1 general election was rigged and manipulated for the BNP led 4-party alliance under a blueprint. Apart from passing legislation, the House formed five committees and held deliberations on ex-President Shahabuddin Ahmed's speech he made on the opening sitting of the new parliament on October 28.

### Toll collection: 3 policemen beaten in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A mob beat up three traffic policemen mercilessly and set ablaze one of their motorbikes for alleged collection of toll from a truck driver at New Ispahani intersection in Pahartali yesterday afternoon. Witnesses said the incident occurred just before the time of Iftar when the on-duty traffic police were seen collecting toll from the truck driver after stopping it on the busy road. Local people and the pedestrian got agitated and beat up the three traffic men and torched their motorbike. On information, the patrol police rushed to the spot and rescued their men. Pahartali thana police while contacted in the evening admitted the incident but denied the reports of toll collection by the cops. In another incident, one microbus driver and its passengers were injured as the microbus hit the rear part of the truck due to its sudden stoppage, eye-witnesses said.

### Sylhet-bound train derails

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The rail communication between Dhaka-Chittagong and Chittagong-Sylhet remained snapped for around 12 hours since Saturday midnight due to derailment of a Sylhet-bound train from Chittagong yesterday. Sources said, three compartments of Udayan Express that departed from Chittagong railway station for Sylhet at 9:00pm, derailed at a place between Comilla and Akhaura at around 12:45am. The derailment of the compartments at a point in between

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Dec 3		5-11 pm
Dec 4	6-27 am	

  

Prayer Timings		
Dec 3		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-01	5-07
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-14	5-20
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation

## 'Surplus' gas can be exported if found profitable: Saifur

BSS, UNB, Dhaka

Former Awami League government did enough work towards export of gas from the country, Finance and Planning Minister Saifur Rahman told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday. "Why 13 PSCs (production sharing contracts) were signed during their time?" he asked and said it is unfortunate that attempts are being made now to raise a hue and cry on the issue of export of gas. The finance minister said the position of the present government is clear on the issue as Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has said export of gas is possible if it is found profitable and only after assessing the surplus. He said it does no harm to export an asset like gas when it is commercially viable and profitable and wondered why gas cannot be exported when Bangladesh exports its assets like tea and jute after meeting the domestic requirement. The finance minister quoted former prime minister Sheikh Hasina from a government document when as the head of the government she had said rapid expansion of the gas market is necessary even beyond the border and mentioned the neighbours as highly prospective buyers. He deplored the "vulgar face" by Awami League chief and said such cheap politics will not serve the nation nor help enlighten anybody's vision.

UNB adds: Saifur said the government finds it very difficult to run the affairs of the country as the previous Awami League regime left a ruined economy after five years of its misrule and failures. Saifur said he had been in charge of the finance ministry for 12 years but was never faced with such trouble managing the economy, which he said was totally ravaged by the AL government. "We have inherited a strangely bad, failed and devastated economy, a destroyed administrative structure... there was politicisation everywhere and we became puzzled in running the government with this destroyed economy," he said. He said the borrowings from the banking sector stood at Tk 38,000 crore during AL rule up from Tk 14,000 crore when the previous BNP government left power, which has left the present government no scope to borrow money now. The economic pointsman of the BNP-led coalition government told the House that Awami League had kept the border open for India for five years and thus also ruined the country's industries. Banking system did not work for the roaring hundi business, which is also truly bad for the economy. Saifur also cited repeated devaluation of the Taka by the Awami League government as reason for the country's shattered economy. He said when the previous BNP government had left power, exchange rate of the US dollar was Tk 40 and it jumped to Tk 57 to 58 during the AL times. Foreign exchange reserve was 3.2 billion dollars when BNP left in 1996, but AL brought down the reserves to a paltry one billion dollars.

### JS tidbits

NAZMUL ASHRAF

Finance and Planning Minister M. Saifur Rahman yesterday was applauded repeatedly by his treasury bench colleagues as he ridiculed the past Awami League government for "naming everything done by the BNP government". "We do the works while they only name those," he said criticising the AL for renaming the Jamuna bridge after Bangabandhu, the international airport in Chittagong after MA Hannan and the Meghna bridge after Syed Nazrul Islam. "They (AL government) had no contribution in the construction of

while taking part in the debate on President's inaugural address to the parliament. The finance minister pointed out that 44 per cent of revenues would be pumped into the economy from internal sources, but the shattered economy would not permit it now. After destroying the share market, Awami League has also shattered the free-market economy, he said. He said the borrowings from the banking sector stood at Tk 38,000 crore during AL rule up from Tk 14,000 crore when the previous BNP government left power, which has left the present government no scope to borrow money now. The economic pointsman of the BNP-led coalition government told the House that Awami League had kept the border open for India for five years and thus also ruined the country's industries. Banking system did not work for the roaring hundi business, which is also truly bad for the economy. Saifur also cited repeated devaluation of the Taka by the Awami League government as reason for the country's shattered economy. He said when the previous BNP government had left power, exchange rate of the US dollar was Tk 40 and it jumped to Tk 57 to 58 during the AL times. Foreign exchange reserve was 3.2 billion dollars when BNP left in 1996, but AL brought down the reserves to a paltry one billion dollars.

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A beam of the first floor of an under-construction building collapsed in the city's Kakrail area yesterday, killing a mason and injuring a helper on the spot.

## Road accidents kill 9 in three districts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least nine people were killed and 21 injured in separate road accidents in Natore, Mymensingh and Magura districts yesterday. Of them, four people were killed in Natore, three in Mymensingh and the rest two in Magura. Our Natore correspondent reports: Four people were killed in a road accident on Natore-Pabna highway yesterday afternoon. Of the dead, three were identified as Jibon, 25, Ashmat Ali, 34, and Sajal, 28. They died on the spot. The identity of other, who succumbed to his injuries at Ishwardi hospital, could not be known. Police and witnesses said, the accident occurred when a Natore-bound pick-up van collided head on with a Pabna-bound truck at Dhanaidaha under Lalpur upazila. All the four victims were travelling on

board the pick-up van. The bodies were sent to Natore sadar hospital morgue for autopsy. A case has been filed with Lalpur thana in this regard. Police seized the truck, but its driver and helper managed to flee. In Mymensingh, three persons were killed and 20 others injured, 15 of them seriously, when a Tangail-bound passenger bus fell into a roadside ditch at Kumargatia in Muktagachha upazila at about 1:45 pm yesterday, according to our correspondent. Police and witnesses said the speeding bus dashed motorcycle on Mymensingh-Tangail highway and then fell into the ditch killing bus passenger Afroza, 30, and motorcycle rider Alamgir, 35, on the spot. An unidentified woman aged

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## Mason killed as bldg collapses at Kakrail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mason was killed and a construction worker injured when a beam of under construction building collapsed on them at Kakrail in the city's Motijheel area yesterday morning. The deceased was identified as Mollah, 60, while the injured as Nurul Islam, 40. The body of Mollah was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) morgue for autopsy while Nurul admitted to the DMCH. Police and hospital sources said the mason died on the spot when the beam of the under construction building collapsed at 11:30am. An unnatural death case was registered with Ramna Police in this connection.

## Winter to set in this week

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The capital and most areas of the country had a touch of winter with cool air blowing for the past three days and temperature dropping to a minimum of 12 to 15 degree Celsius. "It will end today (Monday) but the winter will set in later this week and settle down from the middle of the month," a senior meteorologist said yesterday. A cold spell is likely in the middle of this month and another at the end. In January, there may be two more spells, Director of Meteorological Department Akram Hossain said. Though late, the winter this season is likely to be normal, he said. It was supposed to set in from mid-November but the minimum temperature then remained above the normal average. Akram attributed this to a low

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Rural Bangladesh in a foggy winter morning. The picture shows day-labourers go out in quest of jobs at a village in Narsingdi yesterday.

## SSC examinations Govt warns of action against schools taking excess fees

UNB, Dhaka

The government yesterday warned of punitive action against secondary schools collecting excess fees from the SSC examinees. An official handout said departmental action will be taken against government schools for collecting fees beyond those fixed by the education board. It said grants will be suspended and legal action will be taken against non-government schools for such offence. The warning was issued amid complaints that some government and private schools are realising extra money in the name of coaching and other fees centring the ensuing SSC examinations.

## Convict falls from tree in Sylhet jail, dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A convict of the Sylhet Central Jail succumbed to his injuries in Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital yesterday. Surat Ali of village Ijgaon of Sunamganj sadar upazila who was jailed for 30 years in a murder case, fell from a coconut tree inside the jail yesterday. The incident occurred when chief warden of the jail asked Surat to pluck coconut from a tree inside the jail boundary at about 11 am. He was seriously injured as he fell from the tree. He was rushed to the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries. The jail authorities immediately suspended the warden Mansurn Ahmed Hawlader for the incident. Postmortem on the body was done in the afternoon.

## FFs' Welfare Trust (Amend) Bill passed

BSS, Dhaka

Jatiya Sangsad yesterday unanimously passed The Bangladesh (Freedom Fighters) Welfare Trust (Amendment) Bill, 2001 with provision for making the minister-in-charge of the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs as the vice-chairman of the trust. The bill seeking to amend the Bangladesh (Freedom Fighters) Welfare Trust Order, 1972, also made provision to make the secretary, Ministry of Liberation War Affairs as a member of the trust. In the original trust order, a minister nominated by the prime minister was to act as vice-chairman and the secretary, ministry of defence, as a member of the Freedom Fighters Welfare Trust. State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Redwan Ahmed piloted the bill saying the amendment was required following creation of the Ministry of Freedom Fighters Affairs as per BNP's election pledge. He said the proposed change would make the trust more effective, meaningful and dynamic. Opposition Jatiya Party (Ershad) member Tajul Islam Chowdhury moved two amendments on the bill, while treasury bench member Moshiru Rahman moved one amendment. The House rejected one of the amendments moved by Tajul Islam and accepted the two others by Moshiru Rahman and Tajul Islam.

## Protest against filing of a GD BNP attacks Kapashia AL office, UZ Parishad complex: 35 hurt

UNB, Dhaka

At least 35 activists of Awami League and its front organisations were injured when BNP men allegedly attacked Kapashia Upazila Parishad Complex and local AL office yesterday. The BNP men, allegedly led by Obaid and Reza, attacked the AL office and the Upazila Parishad Complex following filing of a general diary (GD) by Tanjim Ahmed Sohel, son of slain AL leader Tajuddin Ahmed. They also damaged the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Tanjim filed the GD with Kapashia police station saying that Khaleda Zia would be held responsible if anything happens to Hasina and her sister Sheikh Rehana after scrapping of the Special Security Act. Earlier on Saturday, BNP activists in Sripur upazila attacked local police station and AL office after filing of another GD by local MP Adv Rahmat Ali. Police later arrested BCL activist, Kamal, from Tok area under Kapashia upazila.

## Eyes of Bagerhat Jubo Dal leader gouged out

UNB, Bagerhat

Unidentified miscreants gouged out eyes of a local Jubo Dal leader at Chingrikhali in Morelganj upazila yesterday, police said. Abdul Alim, general secretary of Chingrikhali union unit of Jubo Dal, was rushed to Khulna Medical College hospital in a critical condition. Rivals beat him up and gouged out his eyes while he was going to a local bazaar in the morning, police said. Another report said unidentified miscreants injured Arif Ahmed, joint convener of Fakirhat thana unit of Jubo League, in the afternoon. He was sent to sadar hospital.

## DU authorities to rehabilitate BCL activists at halls today

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka University authorities will rehabilitate the ousted activists of Awami League backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) in Zahurul Haq Hall and Jagannath Hall today. The authorities will vacate the halls at around 10:00am and later rehabilitate the students who have valid permission to reside in their respective dormitories, sources said. Students concerned have been asked to be present at their respective hall-gates in due time. The decision to rehabilitate the legal students in their respective halls was taken at a meeting of the Provost Standing Committee on Saturday. Earlier, the leaders of BCL and ruling party's student wing Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) reached an agreement on peaceful co-existence of the workers of the two organisations in the university halls. The rehabilitation process will also continue in other dormitories gradually. Meanwhile, academic activities

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