

## Conspiracy alleged

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"The reports were tying to establish that we are involved in anti-state activities and in the Bangabhum movement and that we are taking funds from the Indian High Commission as agents of RAW. The reports also said we are absconding," he said.

"The daily is also running defamatory reports on Shahrir Kabir, but we are yet to know about any specific allegation against him," he continued.

Ramendu Majumdar, Abed Khan, Naila Hasan, Aly Zaker and Sara Zaker, among others, attended the press conference.

The circumstances have led them to take help of journalists through the press conference, as they feel "helpless", they reasoned.

"They publish reports violating all ethics and norms of journalism.

## SSA urges govt Arrest those responsible for attacks on minorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sammitilo Samajik Andolon (SSA), a platform of intellectuals, politicians and members of civil society yesterday urged the government to take effective measures to arrest the terrorists responsible for attacks on religious and ethnic minorities.

The SSA leaders made the demand at a press conference organised at the conference room of Monisingh-Farhad Trust in the city. It was attended, among others, by Prof Ajoy Roy, Dr. Hayet Mahmood, Pankaj Bhattacharyya, Chowdhury Khorshed Alam, Advocate Abu Taher and Noorul Islam.

The leaders termed the attack on the members of ethnic and religious minorities an assault on the country's democracy and constitution.

The leaders presented a 11-page report prepared after an extensive visit to Bhola, Rajwan, Bagerhat, Bamna, Paghata, Ramghar, Kaliakoir, Aqoiljaha, Gouranadi, Ramshel, Tangail, Gopalur, Monirampur, Naogaon-Natore, Feni and Luxmipur.

The leaders said the government should take steps to repatriate members of the minority communities, who were forced to leave the country following repression.

The SSA leaders alleged that local goons backed by BNP attacked the minorities at different places in the country.

They criticised the government for its failure to provide security to the members of the religious minorities.

## PM urges judges

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Judicial Administration Training Institute, and the project for judicial capacity building.

The prime minister said all the post-independence governments, except the BNP government, tried in different ways to undermine the independence of judiciary.

In this context, she pointed out the unexpected interference into the judicial functions during the one-party rule and the nine-year autocratic regime.

A few days ago, she said, judges faced threats and intimidation and even a stick procession was brought out against them.

"During those bad times, we were with you in the struggle for protecting freedom and dignity of judiciary," the PM told the judges.

About undue delay of disposal of cases, the prime minister said people would lose confidence in and respect for judiciary if they have to wait for years the judgement of a case.

The image and dignity of the judicial department will be undermined if court premises are turned into roaming places of antisocial elements and cheats.

"Sagacious judges should remain alert about this matter. They will have to take the initiative against such scenario," said the PM.

She said friendly relations and mutual respect between bench and bar is related to maintaining fair atmosphere for trial. She hoped that both sides will be active in developing cordial relations.

Khaleda said one of the main pledges of her government is to build an independent and neutral judicial system.

## Nurul Islam Manzoor gets interim bail

UNB, Dhaka

BNP central leader Nurul Islam Manzoor, an accused in the jail killing case, was granted an interim bail by the High Court yesterday.

A former state minister Manzoor was arrested on September 29, 1988 in connection with the killing of four national leaders -- Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, Quamruzzaman and Captain Mansoor Ali -- in Dhaka Central Jail on November 3, 1975.

They neither verify the information, nor do they publish any rejoinder sent by us. How can we fight against this?" said Abed Khan.

Asked why they were not going for legal steps against the daily, Muntasir Mamun said it takes a long time for a case to be settled and the daily would continue publishing such reports.

The daily seems set to defame anyone who had contribution in the War of Liberation, they alleged. They also mentioned the names of a number of BNP leaders, who were freedom fighters and became victims of wrath of the newspaper at different times.

Naila Hasan said none, as the daily tries to establish, was absconding. Hasan Imam went to India for treatment and is still there, she said.

## Suhrawardy

**FROM PAGE 1**  
sages paying glowing tributes to his memory.

The President in his message said the lifelong struggle of Shaheed Suhrawardy was to ensure welfare of the common people and establish democratic system.

"We'll have to make the democratic system more effective and meaningful through mutual respect and tolerance with the inspiration of Shaheed Suhrawardy," the President said.

The prime minister in her message said Suhrawardy had made very significant and far-reaching contributions to the advancement of democratic values in the country.

"His ideal will undoubtedly inspire us," she said terming Shaheed Suhrawardy as a real patriotic and pro-people politician who had strong belief in democracy.

## BTTB's extra phone

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request as the Canadian vendor wanted to make a good debut in the exchange equipment market of Bangladesh.

The BTTB had invited bids for installing 50,000 telephones and Nortel Networks stood out to be the lowest bidder. The caretaker government approved the BTTB decision.

Accordingly, the BTTB initiated negotiations and bargained with Nortel. The BTTB exercised its right to modify the final quantity of telephones without changing the project cost.

The BTTB would earn Tk. 121.44 crore from demand notes for the connections of the additional 66,000 telephones.

Meantime, in the wake of such complexities Nortel is contemplating to revert to its basic contractual obligation of installing 50,000 telephones as the company gets fully paid even if it does not install the extra lines.

## Hasina urges Muslim leaders to stand by Palestinians

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League president and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina has strongly condemned the Israeli missile attacks and bombardment targeting the headquarters of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

In a statement yesterday she expressed solidarity with the just movement for full independence of the Palestinian people led by Yasser Arafat. She urged the Muslim leaders across the world to stand by the distressed people of Palestine.

Hasina also called for urgent steps in line with the resolution of the United Nations.

## Businessman gunned down in Narail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Deen Mohammad Biswas, 38, a businessman of Narail was gunned down by unidentified assailants at midnight on Sunday at Tapanbhag village under Narail Sadar thana.

Police arrested two youngmen identified as Kamrul Ghazi, 28, and Jamil, 30, of the same village for their alleged involvement in the murder.

Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) has already claimed responsibility for the murder terming Deen Mohammad 'class enemy'.

According to witnesses, the assailants shot Biswas point blank. He died on the spot.

His younger brother Noor Mohammad Biswas lodged an FIR with Narail Sadar thana naming none as accused.

PBCP's fax message stated that Deen Mohammad was an armed cadre of Biplobi Communist Party (BCP) who amassed wealth by illegal means. He was a rapist, extortionist and an oppressor of the proletariat, the PBCP stated in the message.

## Shafiq Rehman

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microbus reached in front of the 15 Eskaton Garden residence of Shafiq Rehman at around 7 pm and hurled three bombs. One bomb hit a wall and two others hit the roof of the house.

Rehman was inside the house at the time. The identity of the attackers and reason behind the attack could not be known immediately.

When contacted, the duty officer of Ramna police said that their officer-in-charge went to the spot after being informed of the incident over telephone.

## Stop migration of Hindus

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month. Vajpayee, the source said, reciprocated by saying he was looking forward to meet Khaleda in the Nepalese capital.

This was the first time that attacks on minorities in Bangladesh was taken up by the Indian Prime Minister with a senior cabinet colleague of Khaleda Zia, reflecting New Delhi's serious concern over the issue. The attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh figured prominently yesterday in Lok Sabha, lower house of Parliament, where Vajpayee's cabinet colleagues and Indian Home Minister L K Advani accused the cadres of BNP and its ally Jamaat-e-Islami of "harassing" the members of the minority community.

Replying to a call attention motion tabled by main opposition Congress Chief Whip and senior Congress leader Priyaranjan Dasmunshi from West Bengal, Advani said the attacks on minority community members "bred a sense of insecurity among them in that country."

Advani said while so far no large scale migration of Hindus from Bangladesh following atrocities has been noticed, governments of West Bengal, Assam and Tripura have

## Bonn talks

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should be seized to reach an agreement so Afghanistan can move forward."

Senior Western politicians including German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer and a US National Security Council official kept up the pressure on Rabbani by telephone late on Monday to allow the talks to clear the final barrier.

"There was some pressure left and right and different ways to make those names go on the table," one diplomat said.

AP from Kabul adds: Taliban fighters and members of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida militia were resisting opposition Afghan forces outside Kandahar and have fired missiles at U.S. warplanes bombing the southern city but made no hits, U.S. and Afghan officials say.

The city, the last bastion of the Taliban, remained in the hands of the Islamic group yesterday.

After days of clashes, fighters loyal to former Kandahar governor Gul Agha battled their way into Kandahar airport from the south on Tuesday, but were later repelled by Taliban defenders, according to Agha's brother, Bismillah. Details of casualties were not available.

Other troops loyal to former deputy foreign minister Hamid Karzai were advancing on Kandahar from the north, but said they had met no Taliban resistance.

Refugees who have made it east to the safety of neighbouring Pakistan or north to the Afghan capital, Kabul, reported fighting in several areas near Kandahar. Their claims could not be verified as the Taliban have barred western journalists from the region.

Elsewhere, U.S. special forces are in Afghanistan's mountainous east working with local people in the hunt for bin Laden and his top lieutenants.

The Pentagon believes they might be in the Tora Bora area in the White Mountains

## Arafat: Missile attack

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the Gaza Strip. Early Tuesday, Israeli troops tore up the landing strip at Gaza International Airport.

An adviser to Sharon, speaking just before Tuesday's attack on the Arafat headquarters in Ramallah, said the Palestinian leader himself was not the target.

"We have stated publicly that we do not intend to harm him personally," said the adviser, Danny Ayalon. "But since he is responsible for the wave of terrorism which has been going on, we had to hit something close to him personally."

Three Israeli missiles hit a security station within Arafat's walled government compound in Ramallah, about 50 metres from Arafat's office. The shells knocked down a wall and damaged the roof.

"Arafat was in his office working when the Israeli helicopters fired missiles on the places around his office," said Ahmed Abdel Rahman, secretary general of the Palestinian Cabinet. "It's clear now that Sharon has decided to topple the Palestinian Authority and destroy

south of Jalalabad, hiding in vast fortified cave and tunnel networks used by Afghan guerrillas in the war against Soviet occupation in the 1980s.

In Washington, Rear Adm. John Stufflebeem, the deputy director of operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said U.S. personnel were identifying targets for bombing rather than conducting cave-to-cave searches for bin Laden.

Airstrikes have been heavy in the remote and rugged region. However, Stufflebeem denied reports that U.S. bombs had mistakenly pummeled villages and wrongly killed civilians and anti-Taliban fighters near Tora Bora.

"I don't have any reports of any villages being struck," Stufflebeem said. "The only reports I have are that all our weapons have been on target. I find that a little bit suspect, that villages are being flattened."

Journalists who visited destroyed Kama Adu villages saw nine bomb craters.

The debris of thatch houses were spread over two hillsides along with children's shoes, dead cows and sheep and the tail fin of a U.S. Mk83 bomb. Local officials said scores were killed in three bombed villages. Anti-Taliban officials in the area appealed to Americans to improve their intelligence.

The other main focus of U.S. bombing in Afghanistan is Kandahar and surrounding countryside, where bin Laden might also be sheltering.

Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar and other senior Taliban leaders, who are believed to be holding out in Kandahar itself, have ordered their troops to defend it to the death and not retreat as they did when other cities were besieged by anti-Taliban forces.

Refugees who have left the city say that Arab members of al-Qaida are leading Kandahar's defence.

the peace process."

The army spokesman, Brig. Gen. Ron Kitrey, said Israel had taken careful aim. "If Arafat was the target, then I guess the missile would not have hit the police station," he said.

In Gaza city, F-16s fired missiles at the office of the Palestinian Preventive Security Service in a residential neighbourhood.

Hundreds of children fled a nearby school about 200 yards (metres) from the station after the first missile hit. They dropped to the ground, screaming, when warplanes swooped down and fired a second missile. People evacuated buildings in the neighbourhood and rescue teams rushed to the area. "Sharon has declared war on us. God help us," said one of the children, Ayman Abdul Jawad, 13, running in the street with friends, blood on his head.

Israel also attacked Palestinian security targets in the Khan Younis refugee camp in Gaza and in the West Bank towns of Salfit and Tulkarem.

## Mugger beaten to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An unidentified mugger succumbed to his injuries at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) in the early hours of yesterday.

At about 2.00pm Saturday, the mugger, aged about 35, was caught and beaten by a mob near the Kazia filling station on the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway at Demra while he along with another mugger was making a bid to mug an auto-rickshaw passenger, police said.

The mob beat the other mugger dead on the spot. His identity could not also be known, sources said.

Demra police recovered the injured mugger from the grip of the mob and sent him to the DMCH, where he died at about 12.30am yesterday.

The body was kept at the hospital morgue for autopsy. A case was filed with Demra Police Station in this regard.

## Acting president of Barguna dist JCD arrested

UNB, Dhaka

Acting president of Barguna district Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) Rejbul Kabir was arrested yesterday (Tuesday) following a clash over internal feud.

Rejbul was picked up and sent to jail after Ripon Sikdar, organising secretary of the district committee, was injured in the clash over dropping of tender schedule here on Monday.

## Gram Sarker

**FROM PAGE 12**  
Khaleda referred to the privatisation and decentralisation programme initiated by Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman which she said have also been prioritised by her government.

Focussing on the existing friendly relationship between Bangladesh and Switzerland, the prime minister said there was scope for increasing Swiss investment in Bangladesh.

Referring to the possibility of increasing import from Bangladesh, Khaleda said environment-friendly jute can be popularised in Switzerland and import of jute goods increased.

The Delhi-based Swiss ambassador, who was accompanied by Swiss Charge d'Affaires Gianbattista Mondada at the meeting, said Swiss investors have already invested in pharmaceutical sector in Bangladesh.

Walter G Gyger also said that his government will be happy to assist Bangladesh in the field of education, specially for women.

The prime minister mentioned various programmes especially on women empowerment and free education for girls up to class XII initiated by her government.

PM's Principal Secretary Dr Kamal Uddin Siddiqui and Director General of the Foreign Office Shahed Akhter were present during the meeting.

## Fatikchhari

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from the area on charge of giving shelter to the terrorists.

The arrested miscreants were taken to Chittagong and are being interrogated by district police.

Injured police and BDR men were admitted to Fatikchhari Health Complex, police said.

## BNP's image

**FROM PAGE 12**  
such new BNP elements who have emerged after the elections. The thana unit leaders said the situation is now beyond party's control and apprehended that the relationship between the party and the government would deteriorate if actions were not taken against these opportunists.

Party insiders said none of the top BNP leaders excepting Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Dhaka City Unit President Sadeque Hossain Khoka visited any of the party offices after the elections. As a result, the offices of different front organisations situated at the BNP central office lack any activities.

They said BNP policymakers now feel that the party should be revamped by recasting the committees at central, district and thana levels. The party has also taken a decision to send the ministers and central leaders to grassroots level ahead of the Upazila and mayoral polls.

The BNP is also planning to hold seminars and discussion meetings at different levels on terrorism, corruption and other social problems to mobilise people's support.

Meantime, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has instructed the party secretary-general to organise various organisational programmes. Instruction has also been given to the BNP's 78 organisational districts and MPs to take care of party activities.

The district and thana committees have also been instructed to immediately send lists of local problems, area-specific election pledges made by the party chief during the election campaign and development scopes to the central office.

## BNP may invite AL

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Police atrocities marked the hartal, leaving many AL men including some former ministers injured.

Police also barred AL from holding a protest rally the day after the hartal. Police also arrested several AL activists and raided houses of some former AL MPs in the city.

Angered by the police action, AL announced a country-wide agitation programme on December 7.

"Now we are on the streets to protest the government's autocratic behaviour," said another AL leader who asked not be named. "Now we have to think afresh whether to join parliament sitting."

About the planned government-opposition negotiation, the Speaker said talks have already been started

## Road accident kills 2 on airport road

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two young motorcyclists were crushed under the wheels of a truck yesterday at Joarshahara in front of Khilkhet police box on airport road in the city's Badda area.

The deceased are Tanveer Hossain, 25, and Wahidur Rahman Makhani, 26.

The accident took place when the two bikers were returning home at Narayanganj from Zia International Airport at 10:30 p.m. When they arrived at Khligoan, a speeding truck hit them from behind.

The critically injured persons were sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the attending doctors declared them dead.

The driver of the truck fled after the accident, leaving the vehicle behind. Badda police seized the vehicle from the spot.

The bodies of the victims were sent to the DMCH morgue for autopsy. Later, the bodies were handed over to their relatives.

A case was filed with Badda police station.

## Mockbul's bail

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Sunday's hartal in the city. It said the accused and his accomplices had long been involved in land grabbing in his area.

It also said Mockbul was involved in criminal activities and had a plan to make attacks on government, semi-government and non-government organisations during the hartal which could create a law and order situation in the country.

## Currencies

**FROM PAGE 12**  
1000, Kuwait Diner 660, US Dollars 11,000 and British Pound 15,400, the total value of which stands at Tk 1,27,12,525.

Custom officials also seized his passport, ticket and a handbag before handing him over to the Airport police.

A case was filed with the thana in this connection.

Airport police produced Chowdhury before the CMM's court, Dhaka with a prayer for two-day remand. The court rejected the remand prayer and kept the arrested man in court custody for interrogation.

Customs officials seized foreign currencies amounting to Tk 10,42,66,981 from an aircraft of Emirate Airlines on November 2. On the same day, the custom officials seized 27 different foreign currencies from a Pakistani national at the airport, the total value of which in local currency was about Tk four crore.

at Chief Whips' level and it will continue. "Both the Chief Whips had telephonic talks," he said without elaborating.

Asked when the letter would be sent to the AL, the Speaker said Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain has been assigned for the job and he will immediately invite AL formally to attend the JS session.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition denied that there had been talks at any level between the government and the opposition.

Mentionably, President AQM Badruozza Chowdhury told newsmen recently that he would initiate a move to bring the Opposition to parliament. He had said that he telephoned Advocate Abdul Hamid at his office, but the latter was not available.

Sources said, the President is likely to invite opposition lawmakers at an Iftar party soon where he will request them to join parliament session.

## HC showcause

**FROM PAGE 12**  
under the Special Powers Act (SPA) would not be declared illegal.

Barrister Amir-ul-Islam pleaded on behalf of Shahrir Kabir yesterday. He argued that Shahrir was arrested under Section 54 of the CrPC and then the Magistrate Court ordered his two-day remand. This move is unprecedented and illegal, Islam said.

Attorney General Hasan Arif who appeared for the state argued that there are instances of remand of persons arrested under Section 54.

The court then wanted to know if such remand of a person arrested under Section 54 is legally valid. The court then fixed December 9 for the hearing.

Shahrir Kabir was arrested by Special Branch police on November 22 at Zia International Airport upon his return from Kolkata. Later he was charged with treason and sent to jail with one month's detention.

However, till date, the government could not bring any specific charge against him. Different human rights organisations from home and abroad protested the government action and are demanding his release.

Since October, Shahrir Kabir had been protesting attacks on members of the minority community. He went to Kolkata to interview Bangladeshi Hindus who went there recently following attacks on them at home.

"The pension system mostly consists of a 'one-pillar system' for government employees. The system operates on an unfunded 'pay-as-you-go' basis and it imposes an increasing burden on the government's budget."

The paper said in 1998, actual pension payments stood at Tk 7.14 billion against the budgeted figure of Tk 6 billion. Cash flow projections in "insurance industry and pension and provident fund reforms" in February 2000 indicate that the budget outlay for pensions and commutations of pensions will increase to about Tk 22 billion in

ADB loans

**FROM PAGE 12**  
the civil servants.

In its paper on technical assistance to the government for preparation of the pension and insurance sector project, the ADB said the Bangladesh Railway, and power and water development boards are the other government bodies with large pension schemes in the civil service.

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