

## Hasina blasts move to ban hartal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina has termed the ruling alliance's move to ban hartal and student politics a 'design to cling to power forever.'

Hasina strongly opposed the move saying that if the alliance succeeds in banning hartal and student politics, people would no longer be able to protest any injustice in the society.

She was talking to newsmen following a meeting of the AL Central Working Committee (ALCWC) chaired by her at the party central office at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city yesterday.

The Opposition Leader said AL wants an end to terrorism and use of illegal arms in the name of student politics, but ban on student politics could never be a solution to the problem.

She blamed components of the ruling alliance for giving arms to

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

## 5 injured as BNP factions clash in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

At least five persons were injured as two rival factions of BNP clashed at Kadamtala under Khulna thana yesterday.

The injured were identified as Altaf Hossain, 35, vice president of the ward No. 26 unit of BNP, Shahidul Islam, 30, Sohrab Hossain, 38, Monir, 28, and Ponir Hossain, 35.

They were admitted to Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH).

According to police, the clash began when activists supporting city BNP secretary Nazrul Islam Manju came under attack by the supporters of expelled city vice president Shaharuzzaman Mortuza at about 10:30 am yesterday.

Supporters of two factions attacked each other with iron rods and clubs, police said.

Leaders of both the factions blamed each other for the incident. Mortuza alleged that Manju created reign of terror at Kadamtala. Manju has refuted the allegation.

According to businessmen of Kadamtala, supporters of expelled BNP leader Mortuza first attacked the supporters of Manju without any provocation.

Police arrested two persons belonging to Mortuza group. They are SM Rony, 25, and Sekandar Ali, 30.

## 12 illegal occupants held from bank of Buriganga

BSS, Dhaka

The Inspectors of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) yesterday arrested twelve people from the bank of river Buriganga for illegal occupation of land.

An official handout said, of them, seven were arrested from Kamrangir Char area and rest from Keraniganj area.

The arrested were handed over to thana police.

Shipping Minister Colonel (Retd) Akbar Hossain on Wednesday instructed the concerned authorities to arrest illegal occupants of river banks.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Dec 7		5-11 pm
Dec 8	6-29 am	

Prayer Timings		
Dec 7		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-05	5-11
Juma	12-15	1-20
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-14	5-20
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation

# No early end to BTTB monopoly in sight

## Demand for fixed phones growing but no progress in pvt sector project

MUSTAK HOSSAIN

The gap between demand for fixed telephones in the city and their availability will not reduce soon as there has been no progress in implementation of a 300,000-line project in the private sector.

The Ministry of Post and Telecommunications (MOPT) signed a deal with WorldTel in July this year for implementation of the project. But the London-based company is yet to set up its liaison office in Bangladesh and undertake any infrastructure development work.

Over 1,50,000 applications for fixed telephones are on the waiting list of Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) now, sources said.

As per the deal, the project is to be completed in about two years in phases.

"Virtually no one is representing WorldTel in the country. The company is still operating from its head office in London," said a MOPT official preferring anonymity.

Another MOPT official however said correspondence is going on between BTTB and WorldTel to fix the modus operandi for an "operational agreement" to implement the project.

When contacted, BTTB's General Manager Planning Mohammad Jamil said WorldTel has communicated with the BTTB to set the modus operandi of the "operational agreement".

But signing of the "operational agreement" may take a long time. WorldTel could "share" BTTB's huge basic infrastructure to implement the project, he said.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1



Two of the disabled freedom fighters share a light moment at the Wounded Freedom Fighters' Convalescence and Rehabilitation Centre at Mohammadpur in the city.

# No space for wounded war veterans!

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Observance of the Independence Day and the Victory Day has now become rituals only, devoid of the spirit of the Independence War, some war veterans say.

This correspondent talked to some of the war veterans at the Wounded Freedom Fighters' Convalescence and Rehabilitation Centre at Mohammadpur in the city yesterday.

Gulam Mustafa, Bir Pratik, said, "It has become a routine work. We go to the Smitri Soukho and attend reception at the Bangabhaban. We attend remembrance meetings on December 16. But this is not the proper way to pay homage to the martyrs".

Some other war veterans said people in their thousands assemble and place flowers at the National Memorial on these days as a habit. The spirit of the war and commitment towards materialising the dreams of the martyrs are missing, they said.

Wounded freedom fighters from different parts of

the country come to this centre for treatment. They stay there till the doctor at the centre examines them and refers them to hospital. Though their treatment is free, various constraints compel many wounded freedom fighters to stay at the center for long periods.

The centre has a capacity to accommodate 30 people. But overcrowding sometimes force many to pass nights on the floor. The centre is now in a bad condition. Its supervisor said the roof may cave in any time.

The centre is funded and managed by the Freedom Fighters Welfare Trust. The Trust has an annual budget of around Tk 16 crore for welfare of freedom fighters, from which it gives them allowances. The allow-

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

## PM reaffirms strict measures against acid-throwers

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday reaffirmed her government's decision to deal with acid-throwers strongly and form special tribunal for speedy disposal of acid burn cases.

She said strict law would be enacted also to regulate the sale of acid in order to check the growing hazard of chemical terrorism.

"Arrangement would also be made for proper treatment of acid victims and their living in society with dignity," the prime minister told a delegation of activists working against the menace.

A three-member delegation of the Acid Survivors Foundation comprising Kazi Fazlur Rahman, Adv Sigma Huda and Jean Morrison called on her at the PM Office

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

## AL MP Tanzim Ahmed assaulted by BNP activists

UNB, Gazipur

Awami League parliament member Tanzim Ahmed Sohel was assaulted and confined for three hours in Kapsia UNO office by local BNP supporters yesterday.

Witnesses said BNP-men swooped on local AL activists accompanying Sohel from Gazipur-4 (Kapsia) constituency, in front of the UNO office at about 10 am. They were protesting a GD filed by Sohel regarding withdrawal of state security for Sheikh Hasina and her sister.

As Sohel, who was there to attend a meeting, came out to calm down the situation, the BNP activists also assaulted him. They confined him in the UNO office. He was rescued by police at 1 pm.

Sohel filed the GD with Kapsia police saying that Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and her government will be responsible for any attack or threat on the lives of Sheikh Hasina and Rehana following withdrawal of their state security.

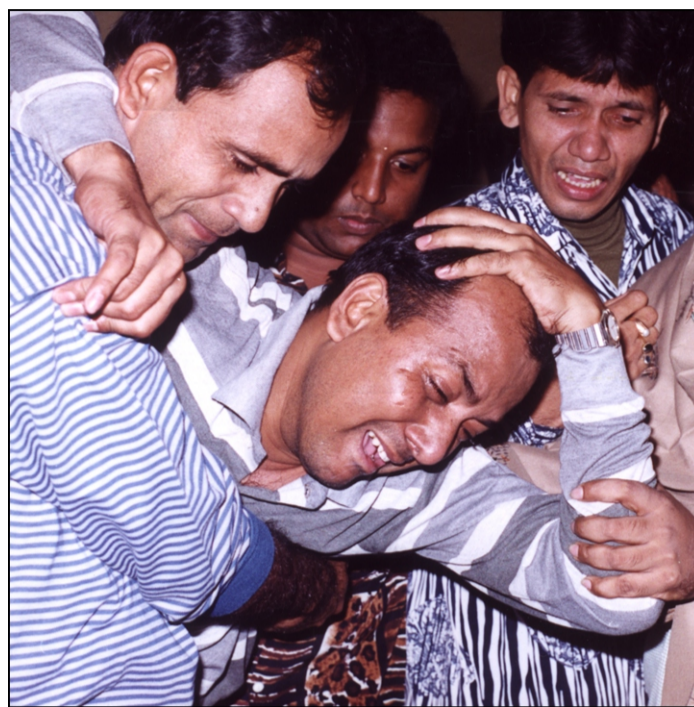
## PCJSS-UPDF gunfight in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

A fierce gunfight between the activists of Parbatya Chattagram Janasanghati Samity (PCJSS) and United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) took place at Montek in Mohalchhari upazila of the district yesterday.

Police and Bangladesh Army sources said the incident took place at around 7:30 pm. Both the groups clashed over supremacy in the area and seven people were reportedly abducted during the clash.

After receiving the report, police and army personnel visited the area but failed to give report of any casualties.



Brother of JCD leader Masud, who was gunned down in the city yesterday, wailing over the body.

# JCD central leader slain at New DOHS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Central leader of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) was gunned down and another person was shot by an unidentified armed gang at New Defence Officers Housing Society (DOHS) in the city's Kafrul area yesterday evening.

The deceased was identified as ABM Golam Mostafa Masud, 30, a resident of Nakhpalpara in Tejgaon area.

The injured, Sekander, is a friend of Masud. He was admitted to a clinic at Banani.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

# Govt to recall several envoys from foreign missions

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Several Bangladesh envoys are being recalled to the headquarters ahead of completion of their normal tenure, diplomatic sources said.

They include Muhammad Giasuddin, high commissioner in London and Sohrab Hossain, high commissioner in Ottawa.

A senior foreign ministry official described both of them as being comparatively junior diplomats to be assigned to two such important capitals.

Former speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali will soon become the country's High Commissioner to Great Britain. Observers feel that the appointment of Razzak Ali to the Court of St. James will enhance the profile of the High Commission in Britain which has to handle vital business and conduct important negotiations.

The new high commissioner to

Canada will be former acting foreign secretary Mohsin Ali Khan, a senior diplomat who displayed diplomatic skills during his short period.

Hasan Ahmed, a former bureau

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

## Police fail to identify tokais from MPs!

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury yesterday said police could not differentiate between the tokai and the member of parliament for which an MP was manhandled by police at BB avenue during the opposition-called hartal on December 2.

The minister was speaking at an informal discussion with Crime Reporters after an Iftar at the winter garden of Dhaka Sheraton in the city yesterday. Home Secretary Dr. Sadat Hossain was present on the occasion.

Police only discharged their duties during the hartal and no excess was done by them to the opposition leaders and activists on that day in the capital, the minister said.

In reply to a question, Altaf said the recent reshuffle in police administration is purely non-political. During the AL government it was done only for political purpose. But in our period, the reshuffle has been made to increase the efficiency of

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

## 79 N'ganj AL men sued for blocking Khaleda's long march in '98

UNB, N'ganj

Seventy-nine Awami League leaders and activists, including former MP Shamim Osman and his brother Selim Osman, have been sued for blocking BNP's long March, led by then opposition leader Khaleda Zia, in 1998.

Local BNP leader Alauddin Al Azad filed the case against the AL leaders and activists with Shiddhirganj thana Wednesday night.

In his case, the BNP leader alleged that a group of terrorists, led by then ruling party MP Shamim Osman, had put up barricade on Narayanganj Link Road crossing on June 9, 1998 obstructing the Chittagong-bound motorcade of Khaleda Zia.

He alleged that the Awami terrorists also damaged vehicles, opened fire and blasted crackers, forcing the BNP chairperson to stay in filling station till evening.

# Parliamentary elections Lankan opposition claims victory

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's main opposition claimed victory Thursday after a parliamentary vote tarnished by violence and vote rigging, as authorities extended a curfew amid fears of a backlash against supporters of the ruling party.

The United National Party (UNP) said it was on course for an outright majority that could breathe new life into Sri Lanka's stuttering drive to clinch peace with separatist Tamil Tiger guerrillas.

Election chief Dayananda Dissanayake went on television to announce that results could be delayed for at least another day while police and security forces enforced a 33-hour curfew to pre-

vent clashes among rival parties. But opposition leader Ranil Wickremesinghe claimed victory and said he would form a government once legal formalities were completed by Dissanayake.

Wickremesinghe, who served as prime minister in the early 1990s, said his party received more than 49 percent of the vote in Wednesday's poll and he was confident the UNP would garner the 113 seats needed to hold a majority in the 225-member legislature.

"I appeal to all the people to maintain peace in the next few days till we form a government," Wickremesinghe said. "We must

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

## Abducted Polar Ice Cream manager freed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Shahjahan Mia, regional manager of Polar Ice Cream company, was left by his kidnapers in a critical condition near the Oxygen crossing in the city in the early hours yesterday, nine days after the abduction.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3