

20 hurt as AL, BNP clash in Chandpur

UNB, Chandpur

At least 20 people, including a magistrate and nine policemen, were injured in a clash between Awami League and BNP activists at Matlab yesterday.

Police said the clash erupted when BNP activists attacked the extended meeting of AL Matlab thana unit at Naobhanga Joypur High School at about 12:20pm.

On information, magistrate AFM Rafiuddin along with police force rushed to the spot to bring the situation under control. The magistrate and nine cops were injured during the clash that lasted an hour.

Police fired five rounds of tear gas shells and arrested three JCD activists from the spot. Three motorbikes were set ablaze.

Injured magistrate Rafiuddin and the police personnel took first aid.

"Awami League was holding meeting at the school defying Section 144," Police Super Bahktier Alam told the news agency.

He said Section 144 was imposed at the school and its surrounding areas from Thursday night to Friday evening as both AL and BNP announced to hold meetings there.

A tense situation is prevailing at the thana headquarters.

7 killed in Pak polls violence

AFP, Karachi

At least seven people were killed and dozens more injured in poll-related violence as Pakistanis voted Thursday in their first national elections since President Pervez Musharraf's 1999 coup, police and party officials said.

Five people were killed in southern Sindh province, a police spokesman said.

They included two people in Naushero Feroz district and one in Sanghar district who died in shoot-outs blamed on election rivalry.

Party officials said the victims included a member of the pro-government National People's Party (NPP) who was killed in the town of Moro in Naushero Feroz district, 250 kilometers east of Karachi.

Jute worth Tk 1 cr gutted in Khulna

UNB, Khulna

Fire at two jute go-downs in the Daulatpur area here gutted jute worth about Tk one crore yesterday.

Police said the blaze broke out at the HMG and Eastern Jute mills at about 3:30pm simultaneously.

Eleven units of local fire fighters extinguished the fire after one hour of frantic efforts.

Khaleda

FROM PAGE 1 need people's support in this regard."

Replying to a question on criminals getting nomination in city corporation polls, she said her party did not nominate any criminal.

She refuted allegations that her party MPs were involved in the recent wheat procurement scam.

On autonomy for the state-run radio and television, the prime minister said the question still remains unresolved as was during the last regime. "The government is considering the issue... We shall reflect people's aspirations in this regard", she said without giving a time frame for the autonomy.

Replying to another question she said her government will place a proposal at the United Nations to adopt Bengali as the 7th official language in the world body.

"We hope the UN would adopt Bangla as the 7th official language of the United Nations," she said.

She was asked about her recent stance on banning student politics but on the contrary strengthening the ruling party's student front Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD).

She said, "We are not in favour of banning student politics through enacting law or by force but we want to put an end to student politics through a consensus. As others are patronising student politics, we need to strengthen Chhatra Dal".

Sylhet JCD

FROM PAGE 12 and announced that fresh committees would be constituted through councils on November 2.

Emran Ahmed Chowdhury, Ziaul Gani Arefin Zillur and Reza Sharif Kamal have been made conveners of the district, city and Shahjalal University units of JCD.

JCD's Sylhet district committee was formed in July 1997.

The district BNP suspended its activities on October 10 last year following killing of two activists in factional fights and widespread allegations of extortion, mugging, smuggling and vandalism by many of the JCD activists.

The district and city units of JCD were finally dissolved on August 25 this year following a series of clashes among the rival factions.

11000 polybags seized in Ctg

BSS, Ctg

Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) yesterday seized 11,000 polythene shopping bags from different parts of the city.

Kotwali police raided Badarpati area in the morning and found 10,000 polythene bags in four sacks.

Police also recovered 1,000 polythene bags from Fakimrhat the same day, a CMP press release said.

2 armed cadres of BCP held in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Two armed cadres of Biplobi Communist Party (BCP) were arrested with arms and ammunition at village Kursha under Mirpur upazila of the district in the early hours of yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, police raided the village and nabbed the two cadres from a house.

Police also recovered two guns and some bullets from their possession.

The arrested outlaws were identified as Jamal Uddin, 22, and Manik, 18.

Israel restricts access to Al-Aqsa mosque

AFP, Jerusalem

Israeli police restricted Palestinian access to Friday prayers in the Al-Mosque mosque compound in the Old City of annexed east Jerusalem for fear of clashes, police said.

Police barred Muslim males under 40 from entering the compound.

The measure was decided following intelligence reports that Palestinian radical groups could provoke clashes such as those which erupted on October 4 after midday Muslim prayers, police sources said.

Israeli police resorted to tear gas last week to break up a group of demonstrators who started throwing stones from the compound onto Jewish worshippers praying below at the Western Wall.

Al-Aqsa mosque is the third holiest site in Islam and was built on the ruins of the second Jewish temple, the holiest shrine in Judaism.

Sylhet doctors

FROM PAGE 12 President MA Haque and General Secretary Anful Haque Chowdhury, BMA Vice President Dr. Shamimur Rahman, and District BMA President Dr. MA Matin and General Secretary Dr. Shahriar Hossain Chowdhury.

The district BMA general secretary however said although the ongoing token strike and the two-day strike on October 16 and 17 had been suspended, the protest march scheduled on October 17 will be held as per schedule.

The Sylhet district unit of BMA on Wednesday called a strike at all government and private health institutions on October 16 and 17 to press for the arrest of the killers of Dr. Aftab as well as to protest police's negligence in pursuing the murder case in that regard. It also called for boycotting private practice by doctors on October 17.

The sensational Dr Aftab murder case was transferred to the Detective Branch last Saturday after police failed to nab the killers even three weeks after the murder.

Dr Aftab Hossain, a popular physician in the Golapganj upazila, was brutally murdered in the remote Ghoshganj village on the night of September 14.

Road accidents

FROM PAGE 12 accident occurred when a Kishoreganj-bound passenger bus from Dhaka overturned on the road at about 1.30pm.

The dead was identified as Shafiqul Islam, a third year student of Bhairab Hazi Asmath College.

The seriously injured persons were sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

A case was filed with Shibpur police in this connection.

Manpower

FROM PAGE 12 some Bangladeshis missions.

Most labour attachés to be replaced were appointed on a four-year contract during the Awami League rule.

New appointments will also be given from among officials of the ranks of deputy secretary and senior assistant secretary, the sources said.

More than three million Bangladeshis are working abroad, most as labourers in the Middle Eastern countries.

In Saudi Arabia, there are over 12 lakh Bangladeshis and two labour wings in the Riyadh and Jeddah missions. There are also two labour wings in the Bangladesh mission in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), a prime destination for Bangladeshi job seekers.

Imran Khan wins seat in parliament

AFP, Islamabad

Cricket hero Imran Khan has won a seat in Pakistan's national assembly, the Election Commission announced yesterday.

Khan won by a margin of 6,000 votes in his home seat of Mianwali, 200 kilometres (125 miles) southwest of the capital in Punjab province.

It is the first time Khan's six-year-old Tehreek-i-Insaf (Justice Movement) has won a seat, and none of the party's 89 other candidates were expected to pick up a seat.

Khan campaigned heavily on an anti-corruption and social justice platform.

He reversed his original support for President Pervez Musharraf, accusing him of backing politicians from the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q), accused of involvement in a massive loan scandal.

Khan also contested two other seats but failed to win a lead.

His party pledged to work for a 50 percent increase per capita incomes by 2007, free education for girls, two million new jobs each year, and full literacy by 2010 and the abolition of income tax.

Khan told AFP as he campaigned in Mianwali last week that he believed voters' weariness with corruption and Pakistan's costly frontline role in the US-led effort to crush the Taliban and al-Qaeda would swell his support.

"The US led war on terrorism is creating more problems than it's solving," he said in an interview as he traversed dirt roads on a tour of villages.

"The hatred against the Americans is growing."

Khan was Pakistani women's choice for prime minister, a survey of 3,000 voters found.

Grenade blast

FROM PAGE 1 Hill Tracts (CHT) Affairs Moni Swapan Dewan, Rangamati District Council Chairman Dr Maniklal Dewan, DC Dr Jafar Ahmed Khan and Police Superintendent Humayun Kabir visited the spot.

The DC said the district administration did not form any probe committee as sabotage was not suspected. Different law enforcing agencies are investigating the incident, he said.

"There is no tension in the town. We have just alerted all law enforcers to remain vigilant, particularly because of the Durga Puja of the Hindu community," the DC said.

Farooq Abdullah

FROM PAGE 12 Salahuddin said India had used the National Conference like "tissue papers".

"India has thrown them in dust bin and will offer the same treatment to those who are going to replace them", he said in a statement issued late Thursday.

Salahuddin, who commands the council's largest outfit, Hizbul Mujahedin, pledged that the struggle against India would continue.

"As far as the armed struggle is concerned, we will not only continue but also intensify target-oriented actions against Indian forces and installations," he vowed.

The council declared that Kashmiris, by observing strikes and curfew, had "made the world believe that they abhor India and want complete freedom from her."

He said the election victors "will play the role of the next stooges," and that their fate would be no different from that of the National Council.

Old Dhaka

FROM PAGE 12 iving units have been set up using up every inch of available space. These units where a large variety of consumer items are manufactured cause undesirable environmental situations for the neighborhood.

Many of the buildings where such factories are housed serve both commercial and residential purposes. In many cases, such houses have no proper passageway, staircase, ventilation or fire-fighting mechanisms. Also, these manufacturing units don't have proper waste management system, not to mention the factor of noise pollution.

The wastes from the industrial units on the banks of the Buriganga find their way into the river, thereby polluting its water on an enormous scale. Besides, the banks of the river at Kamrangir Char and other places overflow with slums.

Thus the inhabitants of old Dhaka, particularly the low-income groups, are bedeviled by an array of adverse phenomena. In order to mitigate the sufferings of the people of the area, the area must be incorporated into the new master plan for the city as far as development schemes are concerned.

The life and culture of old Dhaka form an invaluable part of our national heritage. But unless proper steps are taken to preserve the identity of the historical old Dhaka, the history of its glorious cultural past may be permanently obliterated.



People holding pro-iraq posters during a demonstration outside the US consulate in St. Petersburg in Russia yesterday.

Champion of terrorism

FROM PAGE 1 claiming the achievements of Awami League as theirs," she said addressing an extended meeting of City Chhatra League (North) at Mahanagar Community Centre at Dhanmondi.

Hasina alleged that the prime minister now resorted to "verbal terrorism" by falsely attacking the opposition. "She (PM) lies in favour of terrorists to confuse the people, and in fact is encouraging the terrorists."

She said the government in its bid to influence national politics had tried to eliminate student politics by creating an unwanted situation at the Dhaka University.

"In the past," Hasina said, "these parties had handed arms and money to the students and destroyed political career of some students."

The AL leader felt that for overall development in the political arena, criminalisation of politics must be stopped. Otherwise development of the country cannot be expected.

She made it clear to the student activists of her party that politics is not for extortion and hooliganism - Awami League has a political vision, it works for the people, for development of the nation.

She quipped that the prime minister's war was in fact in support of criminals and the corrupt as she said massive anarchy and countless incidents of killings, rape and repression tormented public life in the year that passed by.

About student politics, the Awami League president said for disrupting the democratic process, some politicians blamed student politics

and spoke of banning it.

"There is no fault with student politics rather those who are using student politics for achieving their own ends are committing a crime," she said. She observed that usually military dictators, after using the students for political gains, clamour against student politics.

Referring to "repression" on Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) workers and leaders, and workers of her party, Hasina asked the students to prepare the list of those who are perpetrating it.

The immediate-past PM also asked them to list the names of persons in police and administration who are meting out injustice to the people and Awami League workers.

"You will have to keep in mind who played what role this time." She said they would need the lists so that they could "punish those who are now resorting to torture and repression on Awami League leaders and workers" after a turnaround in their political fortunes.

Awami League leader Obaidul Qader and Chhatra League President Liaquat Shikder and general secretary Nazrul Islam Babu were present in the function presided over by City BCL (North) President Ishaq Miah.

Huge swing of support

FROM PAGE 1 porters on the outskirts of NWFP's capital Peshawar on Thursday. "We will not accept US bases and Western culture."

Musharraf's main political rivals - Bhutto and Sharif -- were both excluded from the polls, and in their absence their parties performed well below expectations. Both leaders accused the government of rigging the vote count.

Bhutto's Pakistan Peoples Party had won 40 seats by 1330 GMT and Sharif's Muslim League faction PML (N) just 13 seats.

"I have no doubt in my mind the worst kind of rigging is going on," Sharif told Reuters by telephone from Medina in Saudi Arabia, saying that pro-government candidates who had admitted defeat on Thursday night were suddenly being declared winners.

"These figures are totally contrary to exit polls," Bhutto said from London, claiming her information showed the PPP would have won a narrow majority if the vote count had been fair.

"It has been a highly controversial election and we believe there has been widespread rigging."

A headcase for Musharraf?

Musharraf has won fulsome

praise in Washington for the way he has cooperated in war on terror and the hunt for al-Qaeda and Taliban militants fleeing Afghanistan. But his closeness to the United States has not always gone down so well at home.

Ironically, the religious right has traditionally been an ally of the military in Pakistan, used as a bulwark against mainstream secular parties. The MMA was also one of the only groups allowed to campaign freely in the run-up to the poll.

Nevertheless its strong showing was seen by many as a real headache for Musharraf.

"The problem is that the religious parties have to satisfy their constituents, now they are in parliament," said Samina Ahmed of the International Crisis Group. "You're going to have a major confrontation with parliament over foreign policy."

Others, though, argued that this result was just what Musharraf wanted, and would allow him to extract more concessions from the West as the only bulwark against Islamic extremism.

"My information ... is that they are giving Frontier to the MMA," Bhutto said. "They are doing this so they can tell the US 'you need a tinpot dictator strutting on the stage, otherwise the Taliban will take over'."

A divided parliament Musharraf has promised to hand over to civilian rule by early November, but constitutional changes introduced before the vote mean he will still enjoy considerable influence as president.

He enjoys broad support among Pakistan's 140 million people for fighting corruption and imposing a sense of stability after a decade of infighting between the main parties which ended in his seizing power from Sharif in 1999.

But a series of constitutional changes enhancing his powers ahead of the poll has convinced many Pakistanis he intends to continue to run the country under the guise of civilian rule.

Musharraf has given himself the right to dissolve parliament, institutionalised the military's role in politics through a National Security Council and has effectively barred Bhutto and Sharif from returning or ever becoming prime minister again.

The changes came hard on the heels of a widely criticised referendum that extended his presidential term by five years.

Nobel Peace Prize for Carter

FROM PAGE 1 doubt that the Nobel prize itself encourages people to think about peace and human rights, so I'm very grateful and honoured by this."

Asked about the current White House police in dealing with Iraq and a congressional green light for US President George W. Bush to use force against Baghdad, Carter was reserved.

"I don't want to comment specifically on president Bush's policies, but I do think that in every way before we go into a war of any kind we should exhaust all other alternatives including negotiation, mediation, or if that's not possible in the case of Iraq, working through the United Nations."

On the United Nations' chances of ridding Iraq of weapons of mass destruction and on whether Iraqi President Saddam Hussein should be overthrown or not, Carter was more than circumspect.

"I think this morning I don't want

to comment on that," he answered to both questions.

"I think this particular day I'm going to just talk about peace and human rights and the alleviation of suffering and the promotion of freedom," the former US president said.

Despite being nominated for the Nobel Peace prize for several years, Carter made it understood that only once had he regretted not having won the cherished award.

"The only time I thought about it was when we negotiated the (1979) Camp David accords, when (Israeli prime minister Menahem) Begin and (Egyptian president Anwar) Sadat won ... but the committee announced later that I had not been nominated and therefore couldn't share in the prize.

"But that's been a long time ago and a lot of very worthy people have gotten the prize since then," Carter added as an afterthought.

Besides his participation in the

Nepali king appoints prime minister

AP, Kathmandu

Nepal's King Gyanendra named the head of a pro-monarchy party the new prime minister yesterday, party officials said, a week after he fired the government and took political control of the Himalayan nation.

Lokendra Bahadur Chand, who served as prime minister once before, will head a six-member caretaker Cabinet. He heads the Rastriya Prajatantra Party.

"We have heard about the appointment, but we are still waiting for the announcement from the royal palace," said Prakash Chandra Lohani, vice president of the party.

The king held separate meetings Friday morning with the leaders of the six major political parties after a week's delay. The party leaders had said they wanted to have a voice in the formation of an interim government until elections can be held.

Gyanendra indefinitely postponed the elections that had been scheduled to start Nov. 13, when he fired Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and his Cabinet on Oct. 4.

Gyanendra's moves marked the first time since the end of Nepal's absolute monarchy in 1990 that a king waded into politics. The king still is seen by many here as a god, though his role has been mostly ceremonial.

Gyanendra dismissed Deuba after he asked the monarch to postpone parliamentary elections by a year because of the threat of disruption by rebels who have been fighting to abolish Nepal's constitutional monarchy.

Gyanendra ascended to the throne last year after his brother, King Birendra, and eight other royal family members were killed in a palace massacre. A government inquiry later found that the then-crown prince shot the other victims before taking his own life.

Khulna AL leader manhandled by party men

UNB, Khulna

Former state minister for Relief and Disaster Management, and City Awami League general secretary Talukder Abdul Khaleque MP was allegedly manhandled by party workers here yesterday.

Witnesses said Talukder, who was present at a meeting at city AL office, allegedly hurled abuses at a group of AL workers who entered the party office during the meeting in the morning.

In retaliation, the angry activists pushed him and tried to tear his punjabi.

Police however drove out the workers from the party office and the meeting resumed.

Pump owners

FROM PAGE 12

Jamuna -- Padma, Meghna and Jamuna in Sylhet -- collect petrol from the same plant that meets about 80 per cent of petrol consumption in Sylhet Division

The Eastern Refinery in Chittagong meets the rest, with about 25 lakh litres of petrol consumed in Sylhet a month.

The LPG produced by the fractionation plant is supplied to the LP Gas Limited, another concern of Petrobangla, for bottling. The bottled LPG is supplied to the dealers of Padma, Meghna and Jamuna for sale.

The dealers think the quota for regional dealers will be reduced due to the bulk supply of LPG to the private company.

The 5,500-ton capacity plant produced about 8,000 tons of LPG in the last fiscal.

Govt shifting blame

FROM PAGE 12

will really start functioning again", Cox told reporters on Wednesday.

Earlier, deadlock started when the Treasury Bench Chief Whip Khandakar Delwar Hossain and the Opposition Chief Whip Abdus Shahid could not agree on the share of posts of chairman of the 49 parliamentary committees.

With 58 MPs, AL demanded chairmanships of 10 committees. The ruling party disagreed.

Later, Delwar told newsmen on several occasions that the committees would be formed keeping Opposition's positions vacant. But the committees were not formed. Rather, the Treasury Bench blamed AL for not giving the list of its MPs to be fitted in different committees.

When the parliament's third session (budget session) was in progress in June, Delwar had said that the committees would be formed keeping the opposition's positions vacant.

He repeated his words prior to the fourth session of the parliament last month. But the committees were not formed during the fourth session also.

Abdus Shahid regretted that he sent two letters to Delwar on February 2 and September 12 but did not get any reply.

"(In the letters) I requested the Chief Whip (Khandakar Delwar) for early formation of the committees. I also expressed our readiness to give names of our representatives to be included in various parliamentary standing committees as chairmen and members", Abdus Shahid said.

Delwar could not be contacted for his comments despite repeated attempts yesterday.

Ruling party Whip Rezaul Haq Dina was available but he declined to make any comment on the issue. He referred to the prime minister's statement that the committees would be formed soon.

Sources however claimed that the treasury bench could not yet prepare its list of lawmakers for the committees because of an "immi-

nent" reshuffle in the cabinet.

If the council of ministers is made smaller, those dropped will be made chairmen of parliamentary committees, they explained.

During AL's rule, the JS rules of procedure were amended allowing non-minister MPs to be chairmen of all the committees to ensure transparency and accountability in governance.

AL now feels that in absence of the committees, the government is getting away with alleged corruption.

Member (operation) of the Chittagong