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ATTACK ON HUMAN WALL

Countrywide demonstration today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 14-party opposition alliance including Awami League, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Communist Party of Bangladesh and Workers Party will stage demonstrations across the country today protesting the attacks by ruling party cadres against its peaceful human wall programmes at Bogra, Gaibandha and some other parts of the country on December 11.

The opposition parties will also enforce a dawn-to-dusk hartal in Bogra and a half-day hartal in Gaibandha today.

Around 200 people were injured in attacks by the ruling BNP men who reportedly teamed up with police to prevent the opposition workers from forming human wall

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Grenade attack on Indian cine star's Colombo show

2 killed, Shahrukh Khan escapes unhurt

AFP, Colombo

A grenade exploded at an Indian superstar's concert in Sri Lanka's capital Colombo late Saturday, killing at least two people and injuring 18 others, police and doctors said.

The grenade ripped through the most expensive stands closest to the

stage where Bollywood star Shahrukh Khan and his troupe were performing, police said. None of the performers were hurt, they said.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack.

"Two people were dead when they were brought in," Colombo National Hospital director Hector Weerasinghe said. "There are

another 18 injured admitted. Six of them are in a critical condition."

He said all the victims were Sri Lankan nationals. There were however several Indians, including staff of the Indian high commission (embassy), at the show.

The victims had shrapnel injuries caused by a hand grenade, doctors said.

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Arafat's death not natural: Nephew

AP, Ramallah

Yasser Arafat's nephew said Saturday his uncle may have died an "unnatural" death, a statement certain to renew speculation among Palestinians and in the rest of the Arab world where many already believe the late leader was poisoned despite Israel's repeated and vehement denials.

Nasser al-Kidwa, who is also Palestinian envoy to the United Nations, made the comments after he handed over the 558-page medical dossier to Palestinian officials in Ramallah. No diagnosis or reason has been given for Arafat's death on

Nov. 11 at a French hospital.

Al-Kidwa's remarks could cause fresh tension between Israel and the Palestinians at a time when it appeared relations were improving. By providing fuel for rumours that Arafat was poisoned, his comments could also make it more difficult for a new Palestinian leadership to take control after presidential elections on Jan. 9.

But a decision on Saturday by Israel's dovish Labor Party to join Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's government could pave the way for him to implement his Gaza withdrawal plan and restart peace talks with the

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HC to hear contempt rule on 4 dailies Jan 2

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court will hear on January 2 its contempt rule on the editors, publishers and reporters of four national dailies for publishing stories on a judge's alleged roadside urination.

The High Court bench of Justice MA Matin and Justice AFM Abdur Rahman yesterday exempted the respondents from personal appearance in court.

The court earlier had asked them to appear in person before it yesterday and ordered not to leave the

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REMEMBERING IN LIGHTS

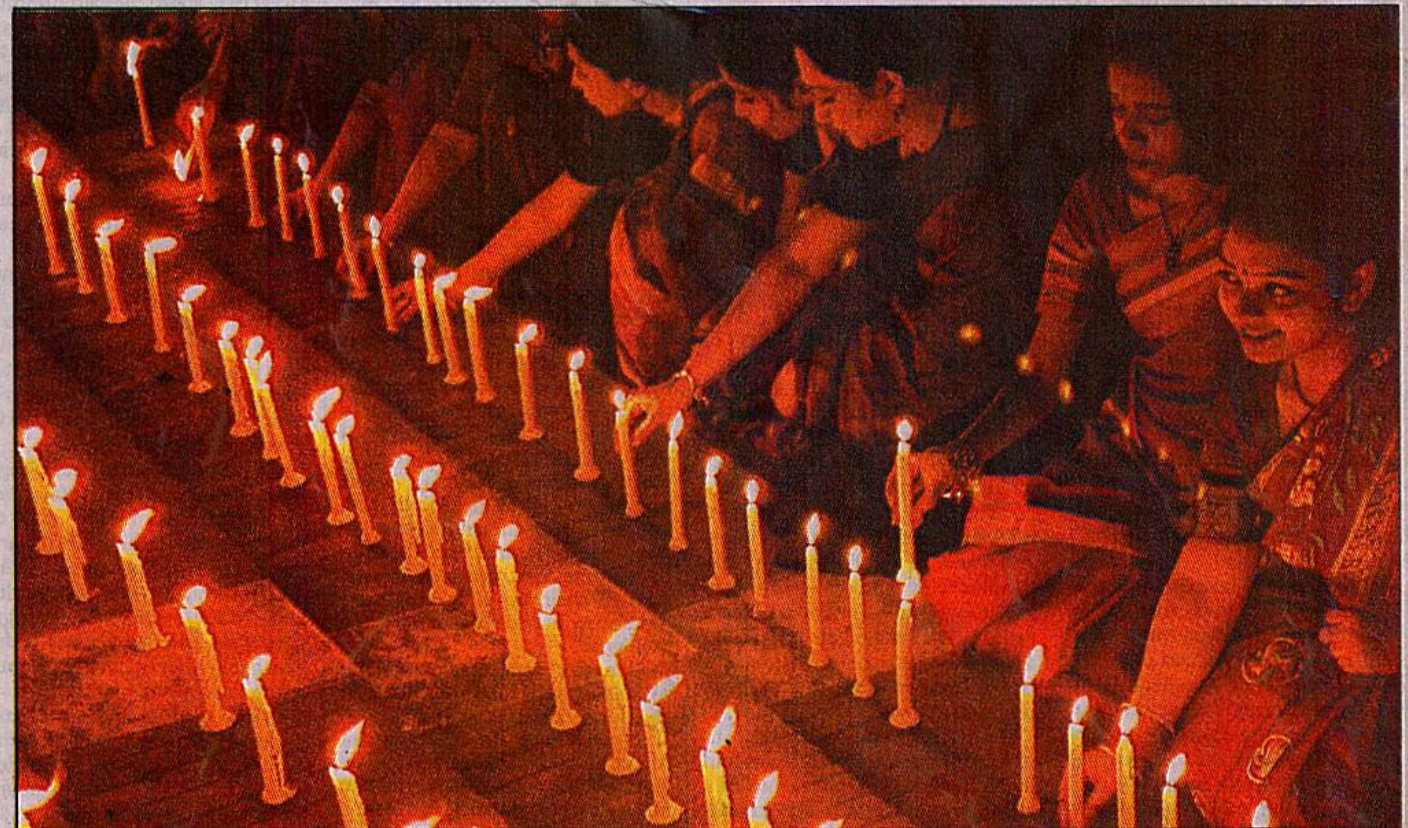


PHOTO: STAR

Women light candles, each in memory of a near and dear one killed in the Liberation War, at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city in an annual programme organised yesterday by Naripakkha, a women's rights body.

Raped 17yr back, now on the run for her life

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

A 34 year old woman, gang-raped nearly 17 years ago, is now on the run after receiving threats on her life if she does not drop her court action against the men she accuses of rape.

The men include a senior politician in the local area.

The threats come after the trial of her rape case is set to re-start after a nine-year gap.

Speaking from hiding, the woman told journalists that in April 1988, three men kidnapped her from her house at Deotola village in Tanore upazila. The woman, an orphan, was 18 years old at the time. She says that the men had first bribed her uncle Sayed Ali Satari.

She alleges that the three men, Mofiz Uddin, the current Tanore upazila BNP vice president and Chanduria union parishad chair-

man, and his accomplices Omar Ali and Yaad Ali took her to an unknown place and raped her one after the other. She was left unconscious in a field.

She says that local people then found her and took her for her protection to Abdul Mozid Molla, the then Chanduria UP chairman and BNP leader, but that he then raped her again.

THE CASE & INVESTIGATION
After her ordeal, her uncle Sayed Ali Satari lodged a case with Tanore police station accusing a man called Muhammad Ali of her rape. Police then pressed charges against him.

When the woman was asked to give evidence at the special tribunal set up in Rajshahi to deal with cases involving violence against woman, she told the judge that Ali had not raped her, as her uncle had alleged,

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India 2wkt away

SPORTS REPORTER

Maiden half-centuries by Nafees Iqbal and Manzurul Islam yesterday helped Bangladesh avoid the inevitable on the third day of the first Test against India who need just two more wickets to wrap up an innings victory.

Pressed under a mountain of

runs after Sachin Tendulkar (248 not out) and Zaheer Khan (75) both players cracked their career-best knocks, the home side reached 170-8 at stumps, still needing 172 runs to force the visitors to bat again.

Manzurul was unbeaten on 50, made off 96 balls with the help of eight boundaries, while Tapash

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Pay commission tenure extended till Jan 31

BY STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has extended the tenure of the National Pay Commission by two weeks up to January 31 on the grounds that the upcoming South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) summit will slow down its work.

The commission, formed last July following an announcement by Finance Minister M Saifur

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ACC chief wants sacked DG back as secretary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Chairman Justice Sultan Hossain Khan has sent a letter to the Cabinet Division asking it to appoint retired major general Abdul Matin, whose contractual service was terminated on Saturday, as secretary to the commission, sources said.

Matin was contracted as the

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Micro credit to reach 100m poor people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The United Nations has declared the year 2005 as the International Year of Micro Credit with a goal to reach micro credit to 100 million poor people across the globe.

Last year, more than 54 million of the world's poorest people received small loans to expand their businesses, a report published recently by the Micro Credit Summit Campaign said.

More than 80 per cent of the

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