

'Take action against Rajpur land grabbers'

Speakers at a view exchange meeting yesterday called on the authorities to evict land grabbers from about 300 bighas of land at Rajpur in Lalmonirhat and return them to the genuine owners.

launched at the programme. Eminent economist Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, former adviser to the caretaker government Sultana Kamal, University Grants Commission Member Prof AHM Zihadul Karim, Assistant Professor Abdur Rob of Jahangirnagar University, FEMA President Munira Khan, ActionAid Country Director Farah Kabir and representatives of Rajpur char dwellers spoke at the programme, moderated by Bidhan Chandra Pal of The Hunger Project.

their inaction and demanded withdrawal of false cases filed against the real owner of the char lands. They also urged all to unite to launch a social movement to protect the char dwellers across the country.

VoIP equipment seized in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) seized Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) equipment worth around Tk 40 lakh during a raid on an apartment at Naya Paltan in the capital last night.

Acting on a tip-off, the Rab members raided the 5th floor apartment in the Sky View building at around 8:00pm and seized the equipment, Captain Kawsar Jahan of Rab-11, who led the drive, told The Daily Star.

The Rab members, however, could not arrest anybody as owner of the VoIP equipment Moniruzzaman Rana had fled away before the Rab raided the apartment.

The seized equipment includes two channel banks, three quantum machines and a huge number of 100 cellular sets, SIM cards and antennas.

Youth beaten by law enforcers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Local people attacked a private clinic after a young man was beaten by law enforcers in front of it at Dhanmondi in the city last night.

The family members of the victim, Salman Karim, alleged the members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) beat him up. The Rab, however, denied the allegation.

Salman, who graduated from Texas University in the USA, returned home recently.

He is now undergoing treatment at the Central Hospital.

Monowar Hossain, officer-in-charge (OC) of Dhanmondi police station, said, "The victim could not identify the attackers."

The security guards of the clinic might have attacked Salman, he added.

Witnesses said Salman was beaten following a heated exchange of words with the law enforcers in front of the Modern Hospital at Dhanmondi Road # 8 at about 8:30pm.

Soon after the incident, local people and family members of the victim attacked the clinic, damaging windowpanes.

Talking to The Daily Star over phone, Dr Ifat Ara, mother of Salman, alleged that the Rab members beat her son as he protested wrong parking of vehicles.

When contacted, Maj Ehsanul Haq of Rab-2 denied the allegation, saying that "No Rab members is involved in this incident."

He also said they are investigating the incident.

AMAR EKUSHEY

'Do not stick posters to newly painted walls at DU'

'Ekushey Uddjan Kendriya Committee' or the central committee to observe Amar Ekushey has called on all not to stick any poster, picture or banner to newly painted walls in the Dhaka University area in order to maintain sanctity of the Amar Ekushey, says a press release.

The call came from a meeting of the committee held at the administrative building of the university yesterday, with committee coordinator Prof Sadrul Amin in the chair.

Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz, Pro-VC AFM Yusuf Haidar and Treasurer Prof Syed Abul Kalam Azad were also present.

Indian clothes seized

UNB, Comilla

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), in separate drives, recovered huge smuggled Indian clothes from Choudhagram and Sadar (south) upazila on Sunday night.

In Choudhagram, a team of BDR 33 rifles battalion raided Hari Sarder area at about 9:00pm and recovered 659 pieces of saree, 723 three-piece sets and 2,635 meters clothes, worth about Tk 54 lakh, from three rickshaw vans.

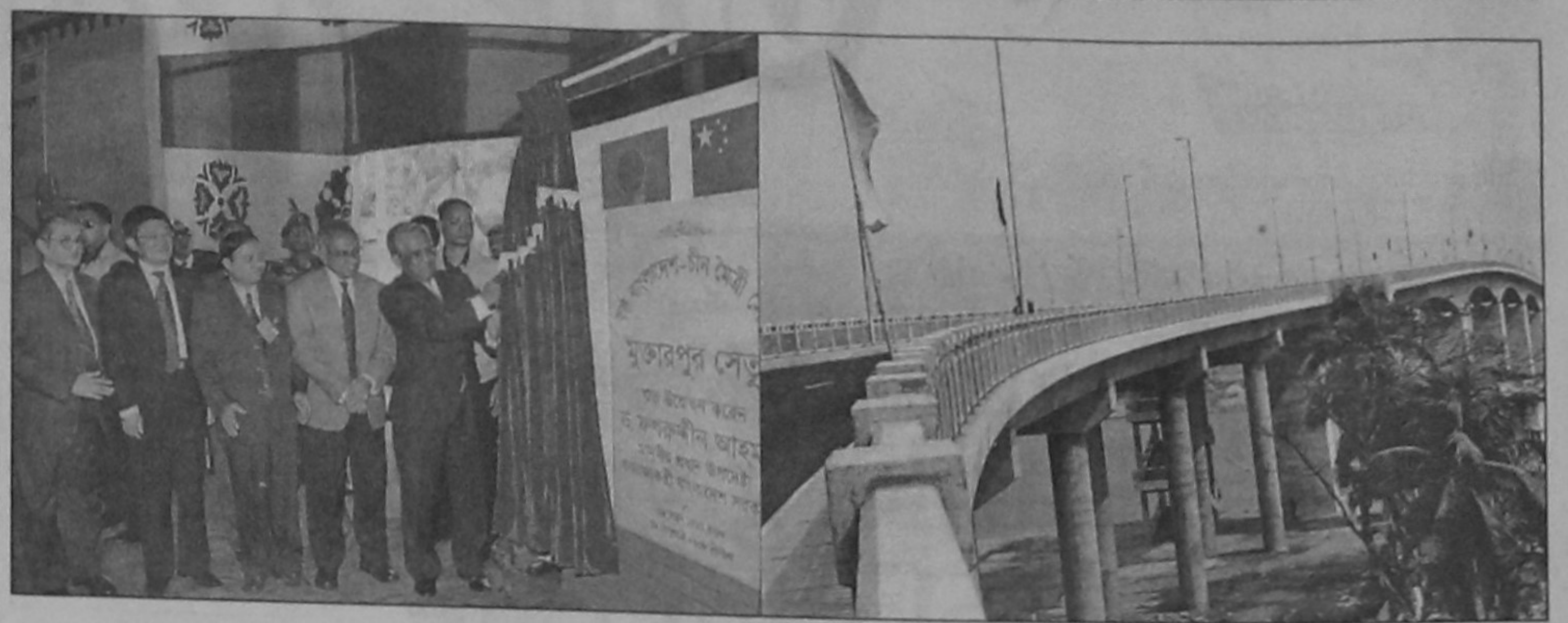
BDR could not arrest any one as the smugglers fled the scene sensing their presence.

In another drive in Sadar (south) upazila, the BDR jawans recovered 320 pieces of saree and 160 three-piece sets worth around Tk 17 lakh, from three rickshaw vans in Bhatpara area at about 10:00pm.

Death anniversary

Today is the 17th death anniversary of Mosleh Uddin B a g h m a r, founder of the Bangladesh National C o t t a g e Industry Samity and one of the organisers of the Liberation War, says a press release.

On the occasion, doa mahfils will be held at Banani Jame Mosque in the city and Jamalpur Baghmar Bari Jame Mosque at Kalligonj in Gazipur.



Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed inaugurates the sixth Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge in Munshiganj yesterday.

Call to stop police remand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police remand should be stopped immediately as many innocent people are being tortured in the remand, speakers at a workshop said yesterday.

They also called for raising mass awareness in order to put an end to all kinds of torture against women, children, labourers, detainees, prisoners and political activists.

The Centre for Rehabilitation of Torture Survivors (CRTS) organised two-day workshop on 'Comprehensive rehabilitation of torture victims' at the Academy for

Planning and Development (APD) in the city. A total of 41 participants took part in the workshop.

ASM Shahjahan, former adviser to the caretaker government, said many innocent people are falling victim to torture in the police remand.

Police remand should be stopped immediately as it leads to violations of human rights, he said as the chief guest at the concluding session of the workshop.

Human rights activist Dr Hameeda Hossain and CRTS Executive Director Dr Kamrul Hasan Khan and President Dr Abdus Sobhan were also present.

Three killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Three people were killed and 43 others were injured in separate road accidents across the country yesterday.

Our correspondent from Manikganj reports: A man was killed and 35 others were injured in a road accident at Kela at Dharmrai on the Dhaka-Aricha highway yesterday evening.

The victim was identified as Siddik, 35, driver of the bus.

Police sources said the accident took place at around 6:00pm when a Dhaka-bound rice-laden truck collided head-on with a passenger bus of Nirapad Paribahan, killing Siddik on the spot.

The 35 injured were taken to different clinics and hospitals in Dharmrai and Savar.

Our correspondent from Gaibandha adds: A tractor trolley

driver was killed and three other pedestrians were injured when a speed truck knocked the tractor at Dholbhanga on Gaibandha-Palashbari road yesterday.

The victim was identified as Omar Ali, 37, who was crushed under the wheels of the truck after the tractor skidded off the road.

Three people were also injured in the accident.

The driver managed to escape with his truck.

In another accident, a man was killed and five others were injured when a passenger bus rammed a rickshaw van at Bakchar on Rangpur-Bogra highway yesterday.

The victim was identified as Mozahar, 45, who died on the spot.

Ansar Ali, the van driver, and three injured were rushed to Gobindaganj hospital.

Abducted boy found dead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered the body of a minor boy, who was slaughtered, from a bush in the city's Uttarkhan area yesterday, 10 days after his abduction.

Police also arrested two suspected killers -- Mohammad Hannan and Zakir Hossain -- from Savar. They have confessed to the killing of the boy.

Police said Hannan, a neighbour of Ripon, abducted Ripon and confined the boy to his house on February 9. Later, in the dark of night Hannan and his associates slaughtered Ripon. After wrapping the body in blankets, they dumped it under a bush in an open plot, around 100 metres off his house.

As the place was stinking, locals informed the police who later recovered the body at noon.

Obituary

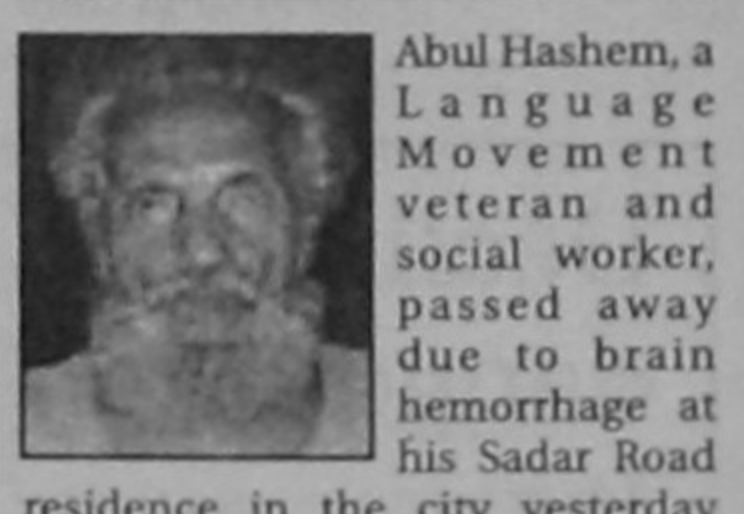
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Abdul Mannan, a freedom fighter and a village doctor, passed away at Manikganj Sadar Hospital on Sunday night at the age of 55.

He was buried at Banlazuri graveyard under Ghior upazila in Manikganj yesterday with state honour.

Abul Hashem

UNB, Barisal



Abul Hashem, a Language Movement veteran and social worker, passed away due to brain hemorrhage at his Sadar Road residence in the city yesterday morning at the age of 85.

He was member-secretary of Barisal District Rashtra Bhasha Sangram Parishad and secretary of district Jubo League in 1952.

His namaz-e-janaza was held after Zohr prayers in front of Aswani Kumar Hall, which was attended by large number of people from all walks of life.

He was buried in Barisal Muslim graveyard.

M Anwar Ali

BSS, Dhaka

M Anwar Ali, a former civil aviation official and father of assistant editor of the Bangladesh Observer Ali Sanwar, passed away yesterday at the age of 91.

He left behind four daughters and one son to mourn his death.

His first namaz-e-janaza was held at Tikatuli Jame Mosque after Zohr prayers yesterday.

He was buried at Azizpur graveyard.

His qulqhwani will be held at his son's residence (Flat 1/A, 33 Chamelibagh, Shantinagar) in the city on Friday.

Relatives and admirers have been requested to attend the qulqhwani.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Adviser A F Hassan Arif visited the deceased house and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President Hasanul Haq Inu also visited the deceased house.

Surutzaman

BSS, Gaibandha

Surutzaman, a freedom fighter, passed away due to old age complications at his Shicha village home under Sundarganj upazila in the district on Friday at the age of 62.

He left behind his wife, two sons and a host of admirers to mourn his death.

He was buried at his family graveyard with full state honour on Saturday.

Sundarganj upazila UNO M Barat Hossain Chowdhury and Officer-in-Charge of Sundarganj Police Station M Abu Zafar attended the janaza.

Convener of Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sangsad district unit command M Wahedunnabi Mintu expressed deep shock at his death.

Md Abul Hossain

Md Abul Hossain, an official of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Board, Rajshahi and president of ward no 16 of city Awami League, and a sports organiser, passed away at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) on Sunday night at the age of 48.

He left behind his wife, son, daughter and a host of admirers to mourn his death.

He was buried after namaz-e-janaza at the city Sopura graveyard.

Rajshahi district Awami League and city Awami League general secretary in separate statements expressed deep shocked at his death. They prayed for salvation of the departed soul and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members.

Hardline Bosnian Serbs seek independence

AFF, Belgrade

The main opposition Bosnian Serb party called yesterday for the independence of the Serb-run half of Bosnia, citing Kosovo as a precedent.

"The Serb Democratic Party is demanding Republika Srpska's institutions provide (Bosnian Serbs) the same rights being given to Kosovo Albanians," said the party, which was founded by war crimes fugitive Radovan Karadzic.

"We expect the (Bosnian Serb) government to meet previous promises and check the will of Republika Srpska citizens in a referendum," the SDS said in a statement.

Since its 1992-1995 war, Bosnia has consisted of two entities, the Serb-run Republika Srpska (RS) and the Muslim-Croat Federation, each with their own government, parliament and police force.

The SDS was established in the early 1990s by Karadzic, who remains at large around 12 years after the UN war crimes tribunal charged him with genocide over the Srebrenica massacre and siege of Sarajevo.

In Sarajevo, the international community's top envoy here Miroslav Lajcak said any attempts to link the fate of Bosnia with that of Kosovo should be prevented.

"Every attempt to artificially link Kosovo to Bosnia or its constituent parts should be resolutely rejected," he said in a statement.

Dhaka closely following issue of Kosovo's independence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will take the decision regarding its support for Kosovo's independence at the end of ongoing negotiations at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

"We are waiting for the situation to evolve," a highly placed source in the foreign ministry said, adding that "We are closely following the issue along with like-minded countries, and also the relevant ongoing Security Council deliberations at the UN."

A foreign ministry press release stated that the decision would be taken on the basis of "perceived national self-interest, the moral questions involved, and the realities on the ground." The ministry did not elaborate any of the three criteria.

"The interests of the people of Kosovo have always been close to Bangladeshis hearts, and we are proud to have contributed to the stability of that region through peacekeepers," said the foreign ministry.

Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia on Sunday. Currently, Bangladesh is part of a large UN peacekeeping mission in the Balkan region.

"In no case can Bosnia be held hostage to Kosovo, nor can it be brought into question." Many Bosnian Serbs feel that their entity should follow Kosovo's lead and be allowed to secede from Bosnia to be eventually attached to Serbia, which they see as their motherland.

Some local politicians have hinted that the RS could try such a move. Meanwhile, up to 3,000 Bosnian Serbs gathered in Banja Luka to

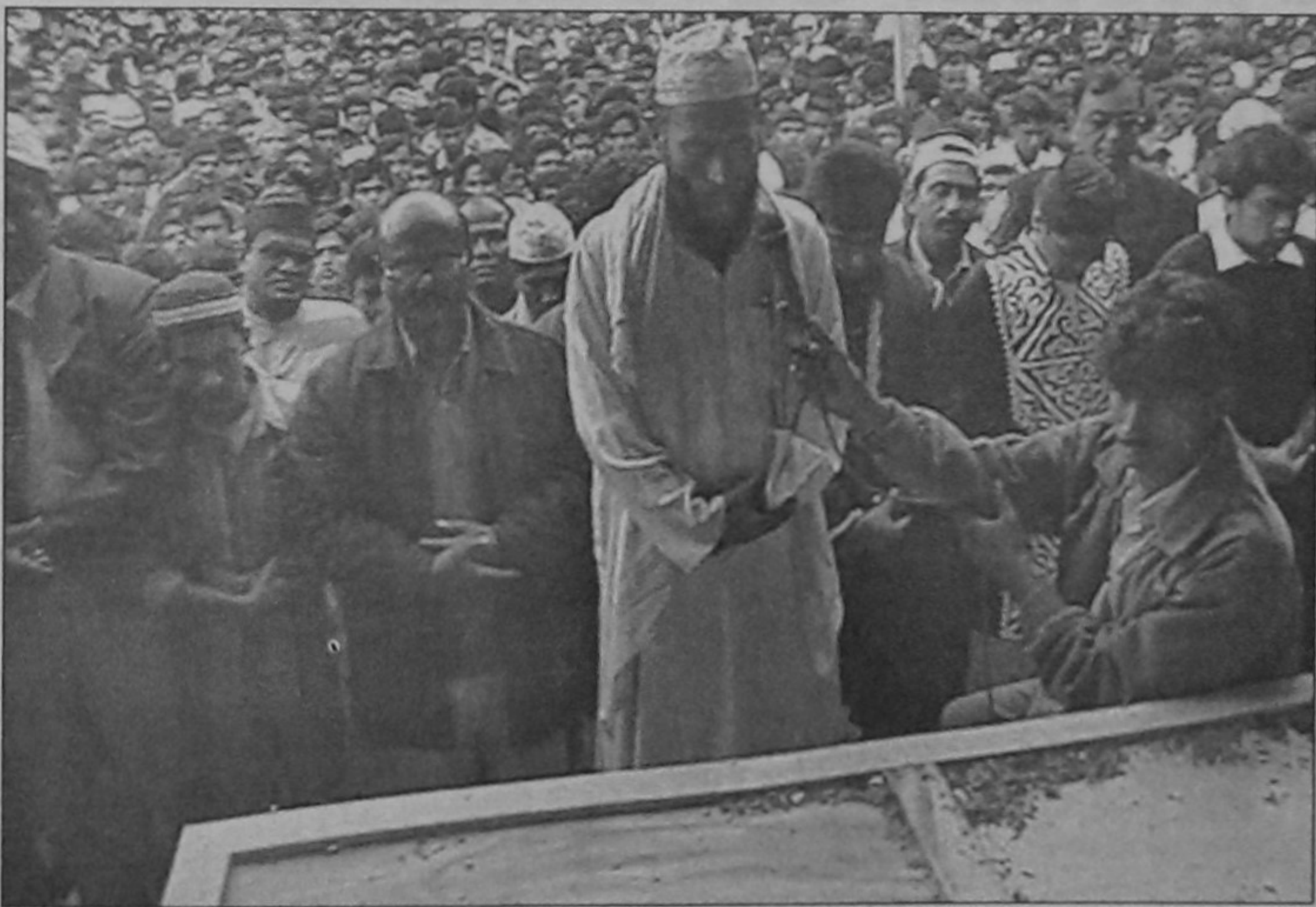
protest against Kosovo's independence.

"Europe shame on you, world shame on you" and "Hashim murderer", the protestors chanted in a reference to Kosovo Prime Minister Hashim Thaci. They also chanted offensive slogans using derogatory terms for Albanians.

The protest, organised by students, started with a minute's silence, followed by another minute of hissing to voice disagreement with Kosovo's unilateral move.

DHAKA TODAY Conference, Discussion, Publication ceremony, Website launching, Seminar. Details of various events including dates, venues, and times.

WEATHER TODAY. Light rain or drizzle likely. Includes a table with temperature and humidity data for various cities in Bangladesh.



The second namaz-e-janaza of noted actor SM Aslam Talukder Manna was held at Elenga High School ground yesterday. Later, he was laid to rest beside his father at his village home at Elenga.

Dodi father points finger at royals over Diana death

AFF, London

Princess Diana voiced concern before her death that senior British royals, including her ex-husband Prince Charles and Prince Philip, wanted to "get rid" of her, her boyfriend's father said yesterday.

Testifying for the first time at the coroner's inquest in London into the couple's 1997 death, Mohamed Al Fayed described Queen Elizabeth II's husband Prince Philip as a "Nazi" and a "racist".

"It's time to send him back to Germany from where he comes," he said at the High Court "You want to know his original name? It ends with Frankenstein," he added.

The monarch's husband was born Prince Philippos of Greece and Denmark in Corfu and educated in England, Germany and Scotland. He renounced his Greek and Danish titles and converted to Anglicanism on marrying the

queen in 1947. Al Fayed said he would "make no allegations" during his evidence but simply state his belief that the couple were murdered.

"She told me that she knew Prince Philip and Prince Charles were trying to get rid of her," he added.

The inquest into Diana and Dodi Fayed's death in a Paris car crash started last October and was expected to last six months. It has heard from a huge number of witnesses, as well as royal aides.

Al Fayed, owner of the upmarket London department store Harrods, claims that a plot was behind the couple's death in the Alma road tunnel on the night of August 30, 1997, to avoid embarrassing the royals by Diana marrying a Muslim.

In court Monday he reiterated his claim that Diana was pregnant and that she and Dodi were about to announce their engagement. "Diana told me on the tele-

phone that she was pregnant. I'm the only person they told," he said. "They told me they were engaged and would announce their engagement on Monday morning."

"She would speak to her sons when she returned from Paris."

Asked to provide evidence, he said: "You want me to get the proof but I am facing a steel wall from the security services. I have been fighting for 10 years to be where we are."

He renewed a claim that blood tests showing driver Henri Paul to be over the drink-drive limit had been falsified, and that a paparazzi photographer had caused the crash by ramming their car with a white Fiat.

"The blood had been taken from someone in the mortuary who had been breathing carbon monoxide by the pathologist who refused to appear because they know their arguments are false and it's baloney and it's not facts," he said.