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Electoral laws being breached

Shujan observes EC should warn political parties, at least

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) should at least warn the political parties against violating the electoral laws if it does not cancel candidature, Shushashoner Janney Nagorik (Shujan) said yesterday.

The EC should also compel the political parties to make public the standards in nominating candidates, it said at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity in the capital.

Awami League (AL) partly complied with the electoral rules that candidates should be nominated on the basis of the grassroots leaders' opinion but other major parties, including BNP, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami had not taken any initiative in this regard, Shujan observed.

"Electoral laws were violated in many cases. It has been observed that the

accused in murder case have been nominated and people got afraid when such accused went to their constituencies," Shujan Chairman Professor Muzaffer Ahmad said.

"Public aspiration that there would be a qualitative change in politics has not been reflected everywhere," he said.

The reluctance of the political parties in reforms has been reflected in nomination process of the most political parties, except one, said Prof Muzaffer, also the chairman of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB).

He said the EC appears to be compromising with the political parties to ensure participation of all in the polls even though the parties violated rules in many cases of nominating candidates. But people should use their right of 'No Vote', he said.

Shujan Secretary Dr Badiul Alam Majumder said a number of government-listed contractors have got nomination for the national polls although the Representation of the People Order (RPO) prohibits them from getting nomination.

He said BNP has nominated four convicts, 16 accused, 12 loan defaulters, seven relatives of top party leaders and one corruption suspect while AL nominated 10 accused, one convict, eight loan defaulters, two relatives of top party leaders and one corruption suspect.

Jatiya Party nominated one convict, one accused and four loan defaulters while Jamaat-e-Islami nominated three accused and one corruption suspect and other parties nominated 10 loan defaulters, Majumder said.

"Forty loan defaulters have already

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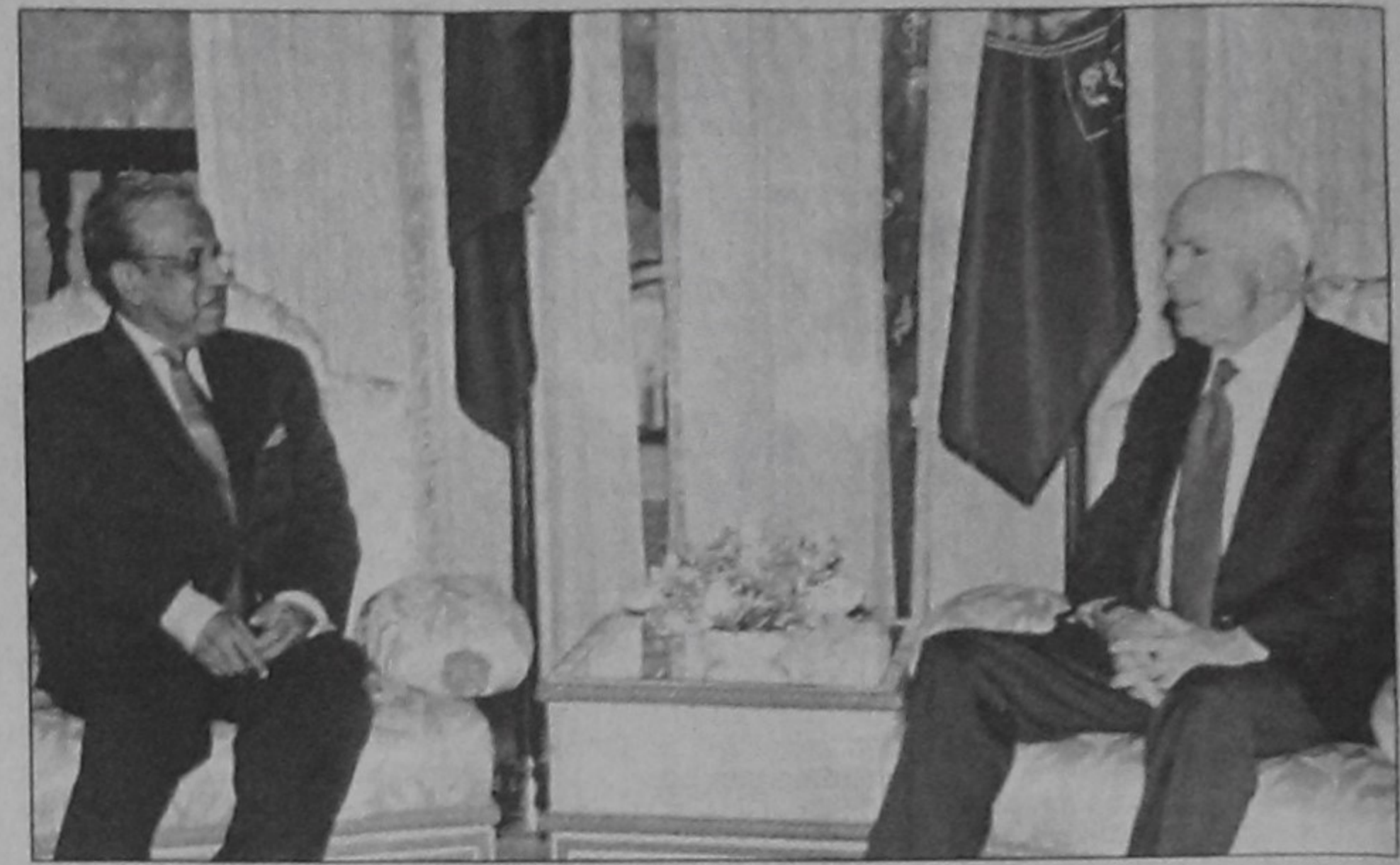
McCain hopes for 'fairest' polls to return to democracy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ending his whirlwind Dhaka visit, US Senator John McCain said yesterday a democratic and prosperous Bangladesh is important for this region and the world to fight terrorism in a coordinated way.

McCain hoped Bangladesh would return to democracy by holding perhaps one of the 'fairest' elections in the world.

He arrived in the capital from New Delhi Tuesday night and left yesterday morning. Senator Joseph Lieberman and Senator Lindsey Graham



US Senator John McCain pays a courtesy call on Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at his official residence yesterday.

2 outlaws killed in 'shootout'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Two alleged members of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-Lal Potaka) were killed in 'crossfire' with law enforcers at Seujbari in Bagmara upazila of the district early yesterday.

The deceased are Mustafizur Rahman alias Surujalias Feroj, 28, and Abdul Jalil alias Asim alias Swapan, 29, of Uttar Koalipara village.

Acting on a tip-off, a special team of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and police conducted an operation when a group of outlaws were holding a secret meeting in the area at about 4:30am.

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INDIA'S PROBE INTO ATTACKS

Rice presses for quick Pak action on Mumbai

AFP, AP, New Delhi

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told Pakistan yesterday to "cooperate fully and transparently" with India's investigation into last week's Islamic militant attacks on Mumbai.

Speaking in the Indian capital ahead of talks with Indian leaders, Rice urged Pakistan to respond "swiftly and transparently" to New Delhi's accusations that the gunmen came from across the border.

Ties between the nuclear-armed South Asian rivals have become strained in the wake of the devastating assault on Mumbai, which left 188 people dead. The two countries have fought three wars since their 1947 independence from British rule.

"Pakistan needs to act with urgency and with resolve and cooperate fully and transpar-

ently," Rice told reporters prior to talks with Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

"That message will be delivered to Pakistan," said Rice, who was expected to fly to Islamabad on Thursday.

Although she refused to "jump to any conclusions about who is responsible," US intelligence officials have suggested the assault was the work of the Pakistan-based militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba.

"This is a time for everyone to cooperate and to do so transparently, and especially a time for Pakistan to do so," she added.

Meanwhile, India's defense minister summoned the army, navy and air force chiefs Wednesday to warn them to be prepared for terror attacks from the air and the sea in the

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UK envoy for smooth power handover

UNB, Dhaka

British High Commissioner Stephen Evans has said smooth transition to elected government through free and credible elections in December is vital for Bangladesh as the country cannot afford to go on with the politics of confrontation.

Speaking at a dialogue organised by Diplomatic Correspondents Association, Bangladesh (DCAB) at National Press Club yesterday, he favoured full lifting of the state of emergency to have greater legitimacy of the election at home and abroad but reminded that public safety is crucial and the voters must be able to cast ballots without

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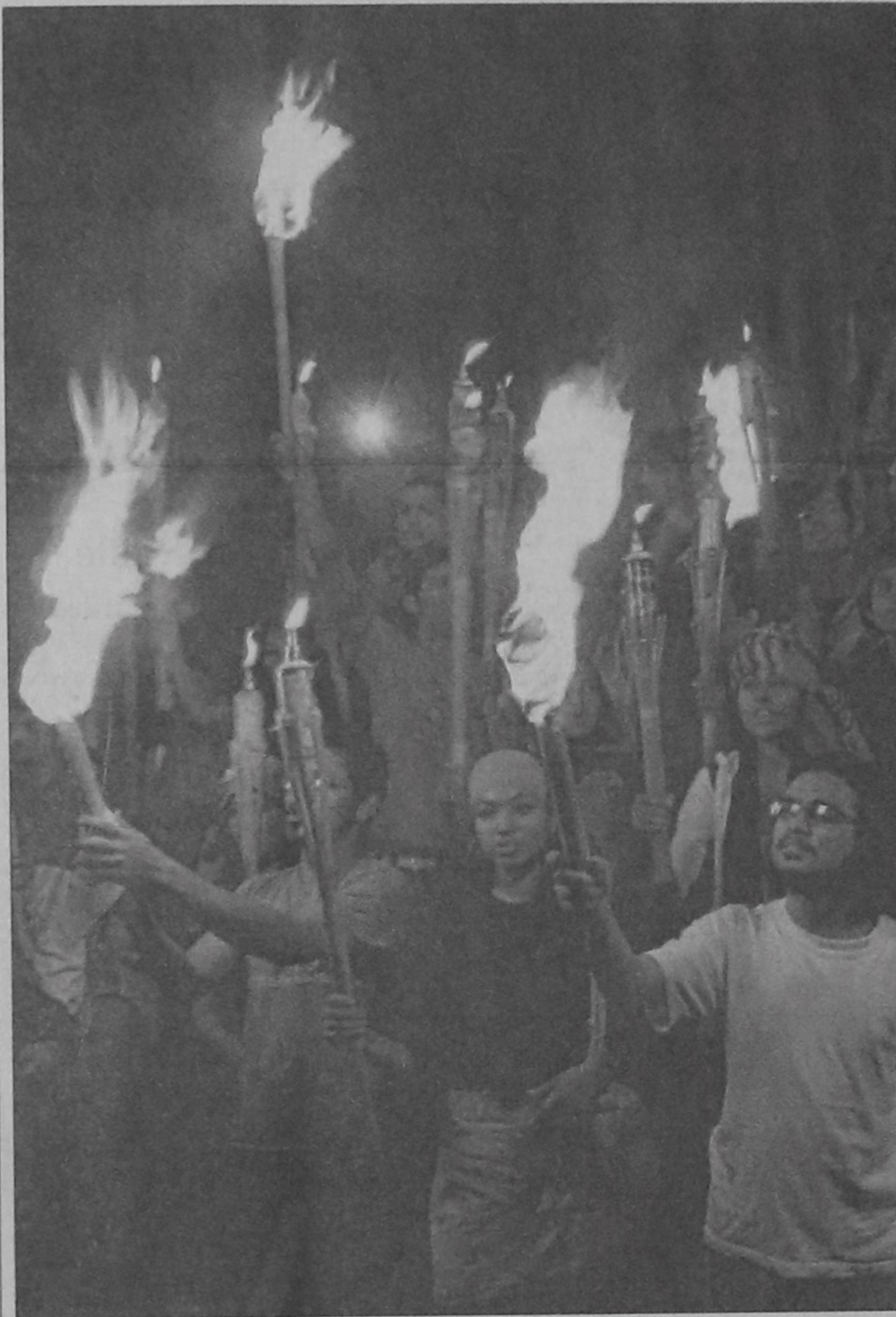
RANSACKING PSC 12 protesters granted bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday granted bail to 12 candidates of the 27th Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) examinations and five of their relatives in a case filed for vandalism at the Public Service Commission (PSC) office in the capital on Tuesday.

The candidates came out successful in the first phase results of the 27th BCS examinations but were later dropped from the list of successful ones as per the second

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Sacheton Shilpi Samaj, an organisation of artists, brings out a torch procession on the Dhaka University campus yesterday evening protesting the vandalism on 'Balaka' sculpture.

PHOTO: STAR

100 countries ban cluster bombs

Treaty signing begins in Oslo

AFP, Oslo

Some 100 nations began putting their names yesterday to a landmark treaty banning cluster bombs, amid calls for major arms producers such as China, Russia and the United States to join them.

Norway -- which played a key role in hammering out the worldwide ban on using, producing, transferring and stockpiling cluster munitions -- was the first country to sign the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM).

"This is a historic day when a majority of states are committing to ban cluster munitions, making a new international norm that will make a considerable difference for thousands and thousands of people all over the world," Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre said after signing the treaty.

Dropped from warplanes or fired from artillery guns, cluster bombs explode in mid-air to randomly scatter hundreds of bomblets, which can be just eight centimetres (three inches) big.

Many bomblets fail to explode, littering war zones with de facto landmines that can kill and maim long after a conflict ends.

Worldwide, about 100,000 people have been killed or maimed by cluster bombs since 1965, 98 percent of them civilians, says Handicap International, a campaign group.

More than a quarter of the victims are children who mistake

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Financial crisis a distraction

Prof Yunus reminds world of rising food, energy prices

AFP, London

The global financial crisis is distracting attention from other pressing issues such as rising food and energy prices, and environmental damage, Nobel peace laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus told AFP yesterday.

The Bangladeshi economist warned that not addressing those other issues would lead to a "much bigger crisis ahead" that would have political and financial implications.

"What we see as a financial crisis is a part of many more crises, which are going on simultaneously in 2008," Yunus said in an interview at a summit of business leaders in London.



"You remember the food crisis? It's still on, it didn't disappear. Simply, this became much more pressing and everybody is paying attention."

He continued: "Then we have the energy crisis, it's still

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Explosives found at Mumbai rly station

AFP, Mumbai

Indian police yesterday discovered and defused explosives at Mumbai's main railway station, left by militants who struck the city last week.

"This is part of the same consignment which the terrorists had brought on Wednesday night when they were attacking and running helter-skelter, some of the material had been left behind," anti-terrorism chief

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Prayer Timing		
December 4		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-15	5-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-19	5-22
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

Rajshahi Medical College closed after BCL-Shibir clash

RU CORRESPONDENT

At least 12 students were injured yesterday in a clash between the activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) over capturing a seat at a hostel on Rajshahi Medical College (RMC) campus.

Following the clash, the RMC authorities suspended all academic activities indefinitely and asked both the male and female students to vacate hostels by 4:00pm yesterday.

Sources said the clash erupted at Shaheed Shah Mainul Ahsan Pinku Hostel early yesterday when a group of Shibir activists led by its college unit president Abu Talha and secretary Anwar Hossain tried to capture the seat of a BCL activist at room no-221 at the hostel.

The clash continued for about an hour and a half, leaving at least 12 BCL activists injured.

The Shibir activists vandalised about eight rooms at the hostel. On information, police rushed to the scene and brought the situation under control.

Later, hostel super Dr Monwarul Islam along with law enforcers raided the rooms at the hostel but did not find anything.

When most of the policemen left the hostel, Shibir cadres reportedly along with a group of outsiders entered the hostel and again ransacked the rooms of BCL activists.

Of the injured, BCL activists Tanvir Rahman, Sajib Uddin, Anup Sarker, Zaman Sakib, Rakibuzzaman, Partho Shekhar,

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Mosque roof collapse injures 40 workers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 40 workers, including women, were injured and four others feared trapped under debris as an under-construction mosque building collapsed in the city's Uttara area yesterday.

Witnesses said the roof of the building broke down when the construction workers started works on it in support of old bamboos at about 11:30am.

All the injured were admitted to different hospitals and clinics, including Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) and Bangladesh Medical. Of them, the condition of Ratna, 42, Raju, 30, Ibrahim, 30, Jewel, 38, Hayat, 28, Jahanara, 42, Hasem, 60, and Bacchu, 40, was stated to be critical.

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Debris of the under-construction mosque in Uttara in the capital that collapsed yesterday, leaving at least 40 workers injured.

PHOTO: STAR