

### Life-sketch of Khaleda

Begum Khaleda Zia was born on August 15, 1945 in Dinajpur district, where her father Iskandar Majumdar who hails from Phulgaon in Feni, was settled as a businessman, reports BSS.

She is the third of the five children of her parents Iskandar Majumdar and Tahaba Majumdar.

In 1960, she passed her matriculation examination from Dinajpur Government School and got admitted in Surendranath College, Dinajpur. During her college life, she was married to Ziaur Rahman, a captain in the then Pakistan Army, who later became the President of Bangladesh.

After marriage, Begum Zia continued her study in Surendranath College until 1965 when she went to join her husband in West Pakistan.

At the start of Bangladesh War of Liberation in March 1971, her husband, then a major posted in Chittagong Cantonment, revolted against the Pakistan Army crackdown and proclaimed, for the first time, the independence of Bangladesh from the local radio station.

As Maj. Zia commanded his 'Z Force' during the Liberation War, Begum Zia was arrested by the occupation army and detained. She was freed on December 16, 1971, the day Bangladesh was born as an independent and sovereign country after nine-month-old Liberation War.

With academic interests in sports and politics, Begum Zia led a modest life as a typical Bangladeshi housewife, mostly devoting her time rearing up their two sons, Tariq Rahman and Arafat Rahman. Even when her husband General Ziaur Rahman became the President of Bangladesh after political changes in 1975, she did neither involve herself in politics nor in the matters of the state.

It was only after the assassination of her husband in an abortive coup in Chittagong on May 30, 1981, Begum Zia started coming to public life and politics.

After the assassination, Vice-President Justice Abdus Sattar took over as the Acting President of Bangladesh and also headed the Bangladesh

Nationalist Party (BNP). President Zia founded in 1978.

Within four months of the presidential election in November, 1981 in which Justice Sattar was elected President with an overwhelming majority, General H. M. Ershad, then Chief of Army Staff, staged a coup, overthrew the President and BNP government, and proclaimed martial law on March 24, 1982.

After the coup, BNP Chairman Justice Sattar appointed Begum Khaleda Zia the vice-chairman of BNP to assist him in the day-to-day party activities. But the octogenarian leader retired from politics making Begum Khaleda Zia the chairperson of BNP on February 12, 1984.

She was subsequently elected by the party BNP chairperson on August 10, the same year.

Since Gen. Ershad came to power, he made BNP founded by President Zia, his prime target of attack. But Begum Zia's indomitable courage and uncompromising leadership continued to make her and BNP popular among the masses. Under Begum Zia BNP formed a seven-party alliance in 1983 and launched a relentless and uncompromising struggle against the autocratic regime of Gen. Ershad. The sole aim of the movement was to force Ershad to step down handing over power to a neutral caretaker government who would hold free, fair and impartial election to the national parliament.

During the long eight-year struggle against the illegal government of Ershad, Begum Zia neither compromised with nor surrendered to the government. For her strict adherence to the principles she had to undergo a lot of sufferings.

On several occasions her movements were restricted by prohibitive laws. She was detained seven times in eight years, but undaunted Begum Zia, continued to give leadership all through in the 'Oust Ershad' movement.

On December 6, 1990 Gen. Ershad finally resigned and handed over power to the caretaker government making an end to the nine-year long movement.

Begum Zia emerged as a popular leader of 120 million people of Bangladesh.

Begum Zia contested from five constituencies in the February 27 elections and won all the seats.

### Soviet envoy meets Mizan

The Soviet Ambassador in Bangladesh, Mr. V.S. Smirnov Tuesday called on the Acting Chairman of the Jatiya Party, Mr. Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, at Gulshan here, a Jatiya Party press release said, reports BSS.



Richard K. Gate, Australia's High Commissioner to Bangladesh handing over a cheque for Tk. 7,617,115 to Dr. Demissie Habte, Director, ICDDR,B on Wednesday.

### Australian grant for ICDDR,B

Mr Richard K Gate, Australia's High Commissioner to Bangladesh, presented a cheque to Dr. Demissie Habte, Director, International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) March 20 in the centre. The value of the cheque was Tk 7,617,115 (equivalent to \$275,000), says a press release.

Australia's grant is to support ICDDR,B's core budget in 1991.

Australia has been a donor to ICDDR,B for some years, and is pleased to be able to support the valuable work of the Centre in the current year.

## Wanted aid for environment programmes in Bangladesh

by Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh, being a victim of global warming due to factors lying outside the country's national borders, needs more external assistance in its environmental programming. Now that a democratic government has been established with Khaleda Zia as Prime Minister, the country is expected to receive international attention in this regard.

The multilateral agencies operating in Bangladesh have contributed about one-third of the total development assistance to the country. The two most important of these have been the World Bank (IDA) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

It is relatively recently that the World Bank has been involved in environmental concerns. The agency views the following as the major environmental problems: (i) deforestation on the hill forests, interior plains and coastal zones; (ii) energy efficiency and pressures on biomass fuels; (iii) flood control (pronounced effects on unprotected areas, streambed rises and water-logging) and effects on fisheries, soil nutrients, transport; (iv) dry season water shortages, leading to improper groundwater management and increasing salinity; (v) water quality inadequate for drinking; (vi) institutional and legislative weaknesses for resolving conflicting demands on resource use and management.

The IDA strategy will encompass institutional development, water management, and forest and energy management elements. The institutional development will focus on improving the regulatory situation, staff training, performance incentives, institutional co-ordination and enhancing local government capacity for resources management. The water management element has quality control, dry season management and flood control as priorities, as well as facilitating riparian co-operation where possible. The forest and energy management will consist of "participatory agroforestry," multipurpose management of the Sundarbans and sustainable energy supplies.

The ADB began integrating environmental concerns into its programming in late 1985 and 1986. It prepared an environmental and natural resources briefing profile for Bangladesh in which it examined: (a) the status and trends in use of the natural resources (b) the environmental policy organization and legislation and (c) opportunities for bank assistance. The ADB's strategy is to assist in reduction of pollution through technical assistance grants

and environmentally oriented projects such as agroforestry, coastal rehabilitation, water and sanitation infrastructure.

### United Nations Organizations

The UN agencies have been a significant factor in multilateral assistance. The two largest components have been food aid through the World Food Programme and assistance in the resources field from UNDP through FAO. The environment has not been an area of focus for the UNDP programme.

Two other UN agencies which have made contributions in the environment sector (through regional programmes as well as specifically for Bangladesh) are the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and UNEP. The former has recently produced the reports Coastal Environmental Management Plan for Bangladesh, and the latter has worked on marine and coastal environment prob-

lems. UNEP is still working on a South Asian Seas Action Plan which has been drafted but not yet ratified by the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC).

Assistance by the Multilateral agencies has concentrated on urban infrastructure to combat pollution and health problems arising from urban growth and on the forestry sector. Past successes in forestry have encouraged the ADB and IDA to extend projects in social forestry and mangrove replantation respectively. Experience suggests that administrative restructuring of the Forest Department would be beneficial for future success of social forestry attempts.

The fisheries sector, on the other hand, has not had the same attention. Since future flood control, drainage, and irrigation projects are projected to increase significantly, there will likely be a corresponding decrease in fisheries potential. While the studies done by

UNEP and ESCAP on the coastal zone have made numerous recommendations, there does not appear to be planned follow-up with implementation of specific projects.

Major environmental issues such as increasing salinity of groundwater, aquifer recharge, and landlessness have not been addressed by multilateral agencies through projects.

Bilateral donors account for almost two-thirds of total aid utilized in Bangladesh, the largest source (85%) being the DAC members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Environmental issues have not been a mainstream focus of OECD programming activity to date, except in selected member countries as noted below.

From 1971 to 1986, the USA was the largest donor to Bangladesh, but it has subsequently been surpassed by Japan. Japan's aid comes more in loan form than grants, and has been oriented to infrastructure projects.

Support to agricultural production has been an important sector for USA assistance. Population control, employment creation, agroforestry and small scale entrepreneurship are other areas of focus. USAID commissioned an environmental profile of Bangladesh in 1980, and a large team carried out a natural resources assessment in April 1989. USAID has a mission environmental officer, and projects are reportedly subject to the same environmental impact assessment guidelines as all federal projects in the USA.



Lions Club of Dhaka Golden arranged a blood donation programme at the Agargaon Women's Polytechnic recently.

## 4000 Bangladeshis to get Saudi re-entry visas

Saudi Arabia, following hectic efforts by different authorities and Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, agreed to renew re-entry visas for the Bangladeshis stranded in the country since the outbreak of the Gulf war on January 17, reports UNB.

The decision to this effect was communicated in a letter by the local Saudi embassy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Tuesday.

The letter said "The government of the Kingdom Saudi Arabia in response to his Excellency, Honourable Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has decided to renew re-entry visas for

those who were unable to return to the Kingdom due to suspension of flights during Gulf war".

About 4000 Bangladesh nationals working in Saudi Arabia came here on leave before the Gulf war. They failed to return to the Kingdom on schedule because of suspension of all flights to the Gulf region.

Even after cease-fire, they could not return to their places of services due to expiry of visas.

Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed raised the issue when Saudi Ambassador Abdul Latif Al Maimeneh called on him on March 14.

More than 100,000 Bangladesh nationals have

been working in different public and private sectors in Saudi Arabia.

They include doctors, nurses, engineers, technicians, salesman, laundryman and tailors.

### 20 hurt as armed hoodlums raid wholesale market

About 20 people were injured Tuesday evening when a group of armed hoodlums raided the weekly wholesale bazar at Shekher Char near Madhabdi of Narasingdi district, witnesses said, reports UNB.

Nine of the injured, mostly cloth traders, were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

They were identified as Mobarak Ali (50), Aminuddin (40), Mihir (38), Ilaroon Miah (17), Utpal (13), Chan Miah (40), Siddiq (30), Akbar (60) and Sunil (30).

### Radio special programmes Mar 26

Radio Bangladesh will broadcast special programmes from all its centres on March 26 on the occasion of the Independence and National Day, a press release of the National Broadcasting Authority said in Dhaka on Wednesday, reports BSS.

### Taxis ply without meters as law not enforced

By Staff Correspondent

Lack of government initiative and strict regulations have led to the withdrawal of fare meters in baby taxis, concerned sources said.

The law to use meters in taxis have been prevailing since 1940. The law was newly enacted in 1959. The same law was in force after the liberation. But government was never strict to enforce the law.

After the promulgation of Martial Law in 1982, government had ordered the baby taxi owners to fix meters, but this effort discontinued after a lapse of time.

Sources said one reason for not using meters in taxis is non-availability of meters. Khaja Autos, a private enterprise, used to import meters but the prices were too high. Each meter cost about Taka five thousand. Sources added, the taxi owners were reluctant to use meters because of high price.

Later, Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) also imported some meters. But these meters were also not sold.

The private importers are not much interested to import meters because they think that there is no guarantee that the taxi owners will use them. "Law enforcing agencies do not take any action if the owners do not fix meters," an importer said. "So, it is natural that they won't fix meters. Who likes to lose money by importing costly meters?" he put a question.

Experts hold the view that

these meters can be locally produced. They think that if government policy supports strict adherence to the use of meters, these meters can be produced at a cheaper cost.

Presently, there are about 32,000 registered baby taxis of which about 20,000 ply on the streets. A Bangladesh Road and Transport authority source said, "how can you expect the owners to fix meters when 35 per cent of these taxis do not have any road fitness certificate?"

A baby taxi driver told this correspondent that he did not like the idea of reintroducing meters because they can ask higher price whenever chances come.

### Plea to recover illegal arms from DU campus

The Dhaka University Syndicate Tuesday called upon the law enforcing agencies to take necessary measures immediately to recover illegal arms and arrest persons engaged in terrorist activities in the university campus, reports BSS.

The Syndicate, at a meeting Tuesday with Vice-Chancellor Prof. M. Maniruzzaman Mia, apprehended that if necessary actions were not taken, the prevailing situation in the campus might take serious turn.

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## Dateline Chittagong

### Protest against massacre in CHT

CHITTAGONG, Mar 20: Tribals and non-locals today jointly brought out a big procession at Khagrachhari hill district town in protest against the massacre of innocent people by tribal insurgents at Bhusanchara under Rangamati district on March 9 last, reports BSS.

Khagrachhari Zila Kallyan Parishad and Khagrachhari Zila Krishak Sramik Kallyan Parishad organised the procession which paraded through main roads and dispersed following a rally at Shapla Chattar. Mr. Dost Mohammed Chowdhury, President of Khagrachhari Zila Kallyan Parishad presided over the rally.

Meanwhile, Babu Samiran Dewan, Chairman Khagrachhari Hill District Local Government Parishad, and Jatin-dralal Tripura, President, Bangladesh Tripura Kallyan Sangsad, today condemned the nefarious activities of the tribal insurgents.

In a separate statements they prayed for the salvation of the departed souls and peace of the bereaved families.

Tribal insurgents in a pre-dawn raid killed six non-locals and set on fire eleven dwelling houses at Bhusanchara.

Felicitations

Leaders of different units of Bangladesh Nationalist Party in Chittagong Tuesday night congratulated their party chief Begum Khaleda Zia and Col Oli Ahmed and Mr. Abdullah Al-Noman of Chittagong for being included in the cabinet formed by the Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed.

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