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# The Daily Star

**Begum**  
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## Clash foils Jatiya Party public meeting

At least 400 people were injured, many with bullet, splinter and knife wounds, as a Jatiya Party rally in the city ended in a pandemonium today amidst tear gas shelling, bomb blasts and batoncharge, reports UNB.

Jatiya Party claimed that three party workers were killed, 25 others missing and 1000 injured during "a series of attacks by BNP activists and police" at different places in and around the capital.

One of the victims has been identified as Liton, a student worker of JP from Gafargaon, party sources said.

The former ruling party organised the grand rally on the Bhowa Road near Saidabad bus terminal in the city to demand release of its leader, ousted president H M Ershad.

An estimated 20,000 people came in buses and trucks, shouting slogans in support of

the deposed president and joined the meeting.

JP sources said armed activists of the ruling BNP backed by police attacked the "peaceful" meeting.

Helmeted police in riot gear lobbed dozens of tear gas canisters into the crowds locked in clash.

More than 50 tear gas shells were said to have been used to break up the rally, while scores of bombs went off creating panic in Motijheel, Khilgaon, Bashaboo, Gopibagh, Tikatuli and Saidabad areas.

Police action came at about 4 pm when JP stalwarts including Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, Moudud Ahmed and Shah Mousum Hossain arrived at the meeting venue.

They left the dais amidst smokes as the meeting ended in a melee. The dais was also dismantled.

Many of the injured were

sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital and different city clinics.

Press photographer of the daily Al-Ameen, Mizanur Rahman Miru, was admitted to DMCII with bullet wounds in the head.

The organisers alleged many buses and trucks carrying their supporters were obstructed at different entry points of the city.

Witnesses said several buses and minibuses were damaged in Farm Gate and Malibagh areas by stone-throwing young men opposing the rally of JP, toppled from power in December 1990 in a prolonged anti-autocracy movement.

Shops and business houses pulled shutters down and transport stopped plying Motijheel, Khilgaon and Saidabad areas amidst sporadic clashes and blasts, according to firsthand reports.



SMOKESCREEN: JP workers running for cover from police tear gas yesterday. —Star photo



BUET Chancellor and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia conferring degrees on BUET graduates yesterday. —Star photo

## Khaleda likely to visit US from March 15

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia is likely to pay a six-day official visit to the United States, beginning March 15, highly placed sources said Saturday, reports UNB.

This will be the first bilateral visit to US by a head of government of Bangladesh.

Her week-long sojourn in the States will provide Begum Zia with an opportunity to exchange views with President George Bush on international and regional issues of common concern and bilateral matters against the backdrop of a changed global scenario, the sources said.

The Prime Minister is expected to seize upon the opportunity to discuss the Rohingya refugee problems with the President of America — a superpower which has already raised the "unfortunate situation" with the Burmese regime.

She will thank the American leader for his personal initiative in helping Bangladesh during the last cyclonic catastrophe and seek

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## Convocation after 16 years Help stop brain drain, PM asks BUET graduates

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia Saturday called upon the country's engineers to contribute their talents to the nation-building efforts.

"The people have given you enough and now it is your duty to reciprocate the people and the country," she told graduates at the third Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) convocation on the campus.

Thousands of beaming graduates, in their convocation robes, converged under a huge pandal raised on the BUET playground. The campus wore a festive look in connection with the convocation, the formal academic certificate receiving ceremony of the university graduates, held in the sunny Saturday morning after a

pause of 16 years. The last convocation of the university took place on November 12, 1976.

The Prime Minister, who is also the Chancellor of the BUET, gave away certificates to the three who did PhD and also conferred degrees on a total of 6269 graduates, and post-graduates.

Speaking at the function, the Prime Minister said that Bangladesh was not only a country plagued with problems, it was also a country of boundless promises. "And the appropriate technology can materialise this prospect into reality," she added.

Begum Zia identified education as the priority sector of her government and said that

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## Review of Action Plan begins today 'Storm' over flood likely

By Mahfuz Ullah

Donors, representatives of the government, technocrats and academicians are expected to be locked in war of words during the four-day review of the Flood Action Plan (FAP) beginning in Dhaka today.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will formally inaugurate the meeting at the International Conference Centre (ICC) to be participated by representatives from nine governmental agencies, universities, research institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), FAP study teams and 26 donor agencies.

The review, first of its kind since the FAP was launched in 1989, will assess the progress made so far, identify the issues that still need to be addressed and discuss plans for future actions.

Conceptually, the FAP aims at "identification, planning, design and construction of

high priority projects which are technically, economically, environmentally and socially feasible."

The plan comprises 11 plan components and 15 supporting activities to be coordinated by the government of Bangladesh and the World Bank.

Following the disastrous floods of 1987 and 1988 the government under took a review of flood policy. A number of studies were carried out. And in June 1989, the government requested the World Bank to develop and coordinate a five-year flood action plan (1990-95).

This was endorsed at the G-7 summit held in Paris in July 1989. The FAP was prepared by the World Bank and was formally endorsed at a meeting of government and donor representatives in London on December 11-12, 1989 and

subsequent Dhaka conference in January 1990.

Since inception the FAP has come under criticism from different national and international agencies for being "detrimental" to the interests of the country.

Critics argue the plan is nothing but an initiative to pay about 145 million US dollars to consultants and experts.

Substantiating their arguments they say some of the consultants like Sir William Halcrow and partners, Mott MacDonald International and so on did most of the consultancy work and in the process study period is being extended while most of the studies should have been closed now.

When contacted, Asafuddin, Secretary, Ministry of Flood Control, Irrigation and Water Resources refuted the allegations and said those who

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## Ministerial level water-sharing talks with India this month

From Munir U Ahmed

KHULNA, Feb 29: A ministerial level meeting is expected next month to discuss the water sharing with India.

M Majid-ul-Jaq, the Minister for Agriculture, Water Resources and Flood Control, told The Daily Star here Friday.

The minister was here to visit some water-logged areas of Beel Dakatia.

Observers say the ministerial level meeting may pave the way for summit-level talks on the sharing of Ganges water. It is expected that the prime ministerial level meeting will lead to a signing of treaty on water sharing.

The two countries signed agreements in 1974 and 1979 on the issue. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed in 1982. A renewal of the MOU was due in 1988.

The minister ruled out the possibility of taking the issue to international forums.

## Cabinet yet to fix terms for KAFCO

By Toufique Imrose Khalidi

The Cabinet sat for the second consecutive day yesterday to talk KAFCO with the Prime Minister in the chair.

The ministers again met today at 4 pm to discuss the largest foreign-invested project, hailed as the Deal of the Year in 1990 by the prestigious International Monthly, Trade and Finance.

Observers consider the developments as unprecedented saying that the Cabinet has already held at least five meetings on an issue concerning a single industrial project.

They say pressure from donors especially Japan has led to such a situation. Sources said the Ministers were yet to arrive at decision on a number of issues including the pricing of gas.

In September 1991, the ministers met twice. The first meeting, on September 3, formed a committee compris-

ing four state ministers which expressed reservations on a number of clauses. Later in October, the Cabinet decided to renegotiate the deal.

However, a highly-placed Industries Ministry source told The Daily Star that a decision on the government's stand on the issue might come within a day or two.

Meanwhile, the renegotiation meeting between the government officials and the KAFCO shareholders Friday ended "inconclusively", according to sources. The meeting was to continue the next day (Saturday), but was cancelled for unknown reasons.

Among others, the Industries Secretary, Dr Ekram Hossain, who is also the chairman of the KAFCO Board, A H K Muraad, a lawyer and a former foreign secretary, and Dr Fouzul Kabir, a First Secretary

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## India should take initiatives to make SAARC viable

India as the biggest partner of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation should take all initiatives to make the forum an effective and viable one for uplift of the economic condition of the vast millions living in the region.

This view was reflected in the deliberations made by a number of speakers while participating in the discussions at a seminar on "Recent global developments and new imperatives for South Asian Regional Cooperation," reports BSS.

The speakers stressed for mobilising public opinion in favour of increased cooperation among the countries of the region under the regional framework of the SAARC.

governmental organisations of the countries of the region could help mobilise the public opinion and foster people-to-people cooperation of the SAARC nations.

Held under the auspices of Bangladesh Peace Council in collaboration with the World Peace Council, the session was chaired by eminent economist Prof Rehman Sobhan while the Executive Secretary of the World Peace Council Ray Stewart co-chaired the session.

A senior research fellow of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies Atiar Rahman presented the keynote paper at the seminar and Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad

addressed it as special guest.

A host of speakers took part in the discussion who included Prof Bijoy Gupta of Jawaharlal University of New Delhi, Sarod Chowdhury, Secretary of the Afro-Asia Solidarity Union, Awami League MP Abdur Razzak, Chief of the Communist Party of Bangladesh Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, Justice K M Sobhan, former Foreign Secretary Tobarak Hussain, former Ambassador Abdul Momen and Ali Akasad.

The speakers also pleaded for reviewing the Charter of the SAARC and bringing necessary amendments so that the member nations could discuss and resolve the bilateral issues under the aegis of the forum.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad recalled the initiative taken by late President Ziaur Rahman in giving the SAARC a structural shape.

He said under the changed global scenario there should be enhanced economic cooperation among the member states. Azad said India having a vast

market should withdraw all tariff restrictions for commodities of other SAARC nations.

He also urged for forming non-governmental organisations to mobilise public opinion and help remove misunderstanding and mutual distrust among the SAARC nations.

Azad said political will along with support of the common people could help resolve many of the bilateral issues of the SAARC countries.

Abdur Razzak said India as the biggest partner should take maximum initiative to remove suspicion and distrust from the minds of the smaller countries.

He also suggested for forming a SAARC economic council for mobilisation of resources.

Saifuddin Manik said India like the character of elder brother of Bengali film should make sacrifices for the smaller partners of the SAARC.

of the nationals of the SAARC nations. He also wanted inclusion of Afghanistan in the SAARC forum.

Tobarak Hussain said India should initiate a process of settlement of bilateral issues with the concerned countries. He also called for revising the SAARC Charter and thereby enable the forum to discuss bilateral issues.

Justice K M Sobhan said that initiative by India alone would not help solve the problems and added others should also come forward with due sincerity.

Summing up, Prof Rehman Sobhan said without undertaking an effective cooperation, the South Asian region might be left out as an odd region in the globe.

## Historic March

A Star Commentary

Twenty-four years of pent-up frustrations and anger exploded and turned into a fireball on March 1, 1971. Pakistan's military dictator General Yahya Khan's declaration over the radio at 1 pm momentarily stunned the Bengalee people of the then East Pakistan into sheer disbelief.

Stunned for a moment. But no more than a moment. As if in unison, almost the entire nation decided 24 years of servitude was enough. There was not going to be any more mock acceptance of humiliations.

General Yahya announced the postponement of the opening session of the Pakistan National Assembly (PNA) elected on Dec 7, 1970. The Awami League had polled nearly 70 per cent of the votes cast in East Pakistan, giving it an absolute majority in the PNA with 167 seats out of 300.

The people's verdict meant that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, as the president of the Awami League and the undisputed leader of the Bengalee people as a whole, would become prime minister. Mujib's landslide victory meant that the centuries-old

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## NZ bring SA down to earth

SYDNEY, Feb 29: New Zealand continued their winning start to cricket's World Cup Saturday, thrashing South Africa by seven wickets at Eden Park, Auckland, after some brutal hitting by opening batsmen Mark Greatbatch and Rod Latham, reports AP.

The New Zealanders restricted South Africa to 7-190 off 50 overs and romped to 3-191 off just 34.3 overs.

In the other match Saturday, West Indies returned to form after their loss to England, beating Zimbabwe comfortably by 75 runs at the Brisbane Cricket Ground.

Greatbatch and Latham battered 114 off 17.5 overs a new World Cup first wicket stand for New Zealand beating the previous mark of 100 by John Wright and Bruce Edgar set in Leeds against India in 1979.

It was a sudden return to earth for South Africa, who won their first-ever World Cup match against Australia in Sydney last Wednesday.

New Zealand were in disarray just a week before the Cup began, after England swept them 3-0 in a warm-up limited-overs series.

But Saturday's victory carried them to the top of the table in the nine-nation round-robin competition with six points while co-host Australia, the pre-tournament favourite, were winless after two games. Australia play India in Brisbane on Sunday. (Details on Sports Pages).

## Rly fare hiked by 7 pc

By Sohel Manzur

The government in a surprise move has raised the transport fare of Bangladesh Railway by average seven per cent from today (Sunday).

A highly placed official while talking to The Daily Star said that the fare was raised to reduce the annual loss of the sector from Taka 165 crore to Taka 125 crore.

He mentioned that the Railway Department was burdened with about 16000 surplus staff and added that the surplus staff along with other factors were contributing to heavy loss every year.

The donors were not providing aid for this sector due to large-scale loss every year. See Page 12 Col 5