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NEWS BRIEFS

Khaleda to visit Pakistan

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will visit Pakistan sometime next month. This was disclosed by Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman while briefing newsmen on the forthcoming visit to India of the Prime Minister. Begum Zia will undertake a trip to Islamabad at the invitation of Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, he said, reports UNB.

Hasina leaves for Satkhira today

Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina leaves Dhaka today on a two-day organisational tour in Satkhira district. On Sunday, she will address a public meeting in Satkhira town and attend a reception at Patkelghata Kashipur High School. Hasina will address rallies at Kalaroa, Baghachra, Navaron and Jhikargachha on Monday and return to Dhaka the same day, reports UNB.

BNP emergency meet May 26

An emergency meeting of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) will be held at the party central office on May 26 at 5 pm, a BNP press release said Saturday, reports BSS.

Pipe gun recovered from Kalayanpur

Mirpur police today recovered one country-made pipe-gun from Kalayanpur slum area, a DMP press release said. The recovery of the pipe-gun was made as per the confessional statement of one Jainal Abedin Liton, and accused of a toll collecting case with Mirpur Police Station. Liton was arrested yesterday from Malda Paikpara. Meanwhile, police arrested 152 persons on different charges from various parts of the city during the last twentyfour hours. All the arrested persons were sent to court, reports BSS.

'Dhaka trying to achieve political will'

Mostafiz rules out accord on Ganges during PM's trip

By Staff Correspondent

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman on Saturday ruled out the possibility of any agreement on sharing the Ganges waters during Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's three-day state visit to India this week.

But Rahman hoped that the visit beginning Tuesday would pave the way to solve outstanding bilateral problems, including the sharing of Ganges water.

"This is in essence a goodwill visit to generate a positive impulse and impetus... to solve the bilateral problems," the Foreign Minister said while briefing journalists on Begum Zia's visit, her first state trip to India since she became the Prime Minister more than a year ago.

Asked if the Prime Minister was expected to sign an agreement on the Ganges issue Rahman said "This is a state visit when leaders usually do not sign any agreement."

He said that the Prime Minister would go to India with an "open-ended agenda" which, according to him meant, all bilateral problems — Ganges, repatriation of Chakma refugees from India, Tin Bigha land corridor — would be discussed with Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao.

The Foreign Minister, who appeared at the briefing unscheduled, faced a series of questions on the Prime Minister's specific mission during the visit.

Asked why the Prime Minister's 10-member delegation excluded the Irrigation Minister, Rahman smiled and said "The water issue will be discussed. Don't worry." Then he added "political will has to come and we are trying to achieve that political will."

Rahman said that Bangladesh viewed the visit as a "curtain-opener that would help begin a new process allowing us to move systemati-

cally towards the solution of bilateral issues." "Until or unless you talk you don't know each other's mind," he said in reply to a question.

Though the Foreign Minister declined to give details, informed sources said that the Ganges issue would be on top of Begum Zia's agenda in talks with Narasimha Rao at whose invitation she is undertaking the tour.

Bangladesh and India do not have any agreement on sharing the Ganges waters since 1988 when the 1982 Memorandum of Understanding expired.

As Foreign Ministry officials expect to break the ice on the Ganges issue, much more progress is expected on the Tin Bigha front. India, despite protests from some political parties, is committed to handing the corridor over to Bangladesh by June 26.

Asked what would be Bangladesh's reply if India raised Bangladesh's alleged in-

volvement with the ULFA, a rebel group in Assam, the Foreign Minister said "Our reply will be the same as before." Bangladesh has consistently denied any link with the ULFA.

In reply to a question whether Bangladesh would discuss the issue of selling natural gas to India Rahman said "If they want to talk we will talk. But we have no commitment to them."

The Foreign Minister said that Begum Zia's upcoming visit would not only create congenial atmosphere to solve bilateral problems but also would help create "new and innovative avenues specially in socio-economic fields." Detailing this, he said that the two prime ministers would discuss expansion of trade and industrial development.

He said that the visit was important from the SAARC point of view as Bangladesh, the birthplace of SAARC re-

RSO, ARIF threaten dire consequences

Rohingyas split over going back home

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, May 23: Myanmar refugees are now divided over the repatriation to their homeland as there is a section among them instigating the others not to return.

Rohingya refugees living in several camps in the district Saturday visited the refugee camps of the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO) and the Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front (ARIF), two guerrilla organisations outlawed in Myanmar, were urging them not to return.

They also threatened the refugees of dire consequences if they said anything in favour of repatriation, the refugees alleged.

As a result of the pressure in the camps, the refugees do not dare to open their mouths, according to the refugees.

Sporadic clashes between the refugees have been taking

place almost every day because of the uncertainty over the repatriation.

Meanwhile, Home Minister Abdul Matia Chowdhury Saturday visited the refugee camps in the district. Later, the Minister held a meeting in Cox's Bazar town with the district officials and the local political leaders.

The minister said that repatriation of the Myanmar refugees would begin soon.

He said that the accord between Bangladesh and Myanmar was a complete one and that the refugees need not worry about their safety.

The Home Minister pointed out that a certain quarter was trying to create confusion among the refugees and encouraging them not to return.

He asked all to be alert against this quarter.

Refugees move soon, says FM

By Staff Correspondent

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman describing the Rohingya refugee problem as a temporary one said Saturday that the first batch of Rohingyas would soon be returning to their home villages in Myanmar.

"It's not going to be a long-term problem. The refugees will be moving soon, but without force or any form of coercion," the Minister told reporters during a briefing at the foreign ministry in the afternoon.

Rahman said that the agreement signed with Myanmar Foreign Minister U Ohn Gyaaw on April 28 last was a "very good one" which had earned the praise of people in other South and South East Asian capitals.

The Foreign Minister emphasised that the Bangladesh government was not going to force any of the estimated 250,000 Rohingya Muslim refugees back to the north-western Myanmar province of Rakhaine from which they been fleeing since March last year.

"We will give them pep-talk and persuade them to return," he said.

Mustafizur Rahman acknowledged that there were problems, particularly involving apprehension among the refugees about the prevailing situation inside Myanmar. He, however, pointed out that certain provisions in the April 28 accord were designed to take care of such unease.

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AL General Secretary post

Top contenders jostle for Hasina's blessings

By Nurul Kabir

With the date of the Awami League's biennial council session approaching, party leaders aspiring for the post of General Secretary are getting busier in trying to get the blessings of AL chief Sheikh Hasina on the one hand and earning support of the district level leaders on the other, sources say.

The AL's fifth biennial council session after the country's independence in 1971 is scheduled to be held on June 1 and 2 this year. The fourth one was held in 1987 last.

According to party insiders, the party's present Joint Secretary Amir Hossain Amu, Organising Secretary Tofael Ahmed MP, Abdur Razzak MP, a former secretary of the AL who quit the party to form Baksal in 1983 and rejoined the party last year and the Agriculture Secretary of the party Matia Chowdhury MP are the active contenders for the

post.

During the two-hour clash from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm, the workers of both groups chased each other firing guns.

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People won't allow firing of workers: Hasina

Awami League chief and Leader of the opposition in parliament Sheikh Hasina termed Prime Minister Begum Zia's 14-month rule "a story of failures" saying economic problems facing the nation deepened further due to her government's inefficiency and mismanagement, reports UNB.

Hasina recalled the objectives of the anti-autocracy movement and said people's hopes for economic well-being under the democratic environment were dashed to the ground due to government's "misrule".

She alleged that Ministers, MPs, leaders and workers of the ruling BNP are engaged in amassing wealth through corruption when the vast section of the commonman remains half-fed or even unfed.

The government has failed to provide jobs to the unemployed, halt price spiral, contain terrorism, and implement

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Sec 144 on in Rangamati

PCP activists ask people not to take govt relief

RANGAMATI, May 23: The section 144 imposed in the town after Tuesday's violence continued for the fourth consecutive day today, reports UNB.

The situation in the town is gradually returning to normal after a fierce clash between two rival groups of tribal and non-tribal students left a dozen people injured, officials said. More than 60 houses and shops were burnt during the incident.

Meanwhile, some activists of the Pahari Chhatra Parishad (Hill Students' Council) allegedly took away the cash money the affected people had received from the administration.

Officials quoted Hla Thoai Prue Karbari and Mirnal Kanti Chakma of Dewanpara Baranrupa as saying that a group of PCP activists led by Babudhan Chakma, Probr Chakma and Shibly Chakma also asked them today not to take further relief from the government.

The PCP activists, who had earlier warned them not to receive relief from the local administration, reportedly told

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Bangla College JCD-BCL clash over control of union office

By Staff Correspondent

Two rival groups of students clashed in and around Mirpur Bangla College in the city Saturday to take control of the college students' union office.

It was a sequel to previous clashes between the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) backed Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Awami League backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) during the last few weeks.

During the two-hour clash from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm, the workers of both groups chased each other firing guns.

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Rival students clash Hatem Ali College closed sine die

From Our Correspondent

BARISAL, May 23: The Syed Hatem Ali College in Barisal town was closed sine die Saturday following a fierce clash between two groups of rival students which left at least 10 injured.

Witnesses said the clash ensued Saturday morning over arrangement of freshers' reception of the college.

Syed Hatem Ali College Principal Prof Muhammad Shahjahan and another teacher Prof Amjad fell sick after witnessing the bloody clash. The teachers were admitted at the Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

Campus sources said the brawl began when Bangladesh Chhatra League organised reception to the freshers without the consent of other members of the college students union.

A panicky situation was created on the campus when the feuding groups freely used sticks, knives and fire arms.

The academic council of the college at an emergency meeting Saturday afternoon announced closure of the college for an indefinite period.

Heavy contingent of police was deployed on the campus.

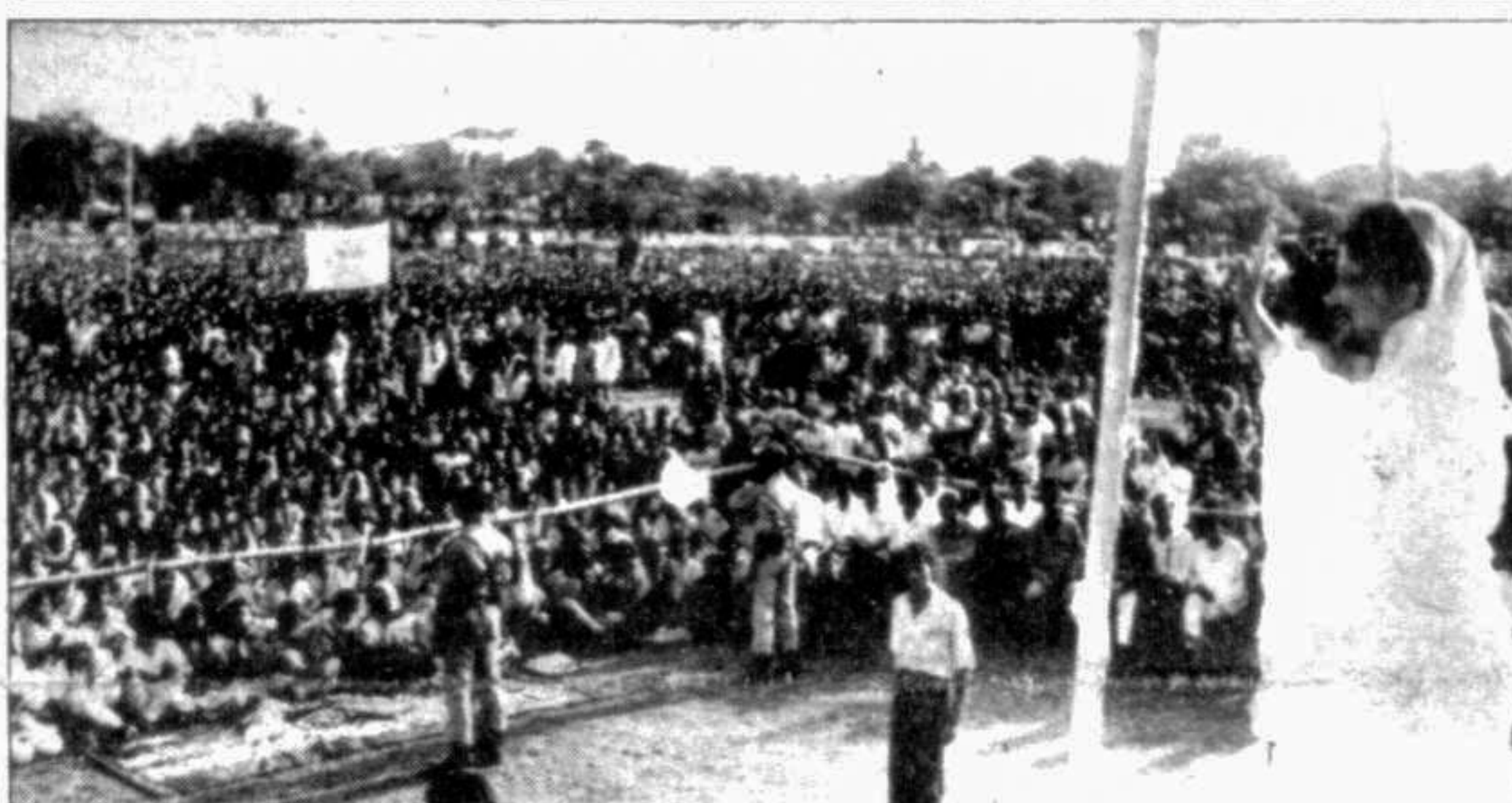
MBBS admission seekers warn of fresh action programme

The Medical Admission Test Cancellation Committee Saturday threatened it would announce fresh action programme in a protest rally on Monday if the enquiry report doesn't accommodate its demand, reports UNB.

Report of the enquiry body, constituted to probe allegation of question leakage, will be submitted today.

Addressing a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club, the committee activists said members of the action body from all over the country would assemble in the proposed grand rally in the capital to launch a greater movement.

They are demanding cancellation of the test as well as exemplary punishment of the culprits responsible for the April 10 MBBS question leakage.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a public meeting at Narshingdi Stadium yesterday. —PID photo

Govt won't retrench but employ more: Khaleda

NARSINGDI, May 23: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today said her government would pursue the policy of employing more labourers instead of retrenching anyone and urged industrial workers to shun the path of rail-road blockade, reports UNB.

"The government will see to all problems of the workers, but if they take the people hostage and go for road-rail siege frequently, how new industries can be set up for employing more workforce?" She asked while addressing a huge public meeting at the local stadium this afternoon.

Jute and textile workers

have announced a programme for rail-road strike on July 24, while SKOP goes for a 48-hour country-wide strike from July 7 to press their respective demands, including wage hike and halt to reported move to slash surplus workers and denationalisation of public enterprises.

"Those provoking you in rail-road blockade are not your friends, they do not want foreign investment, rather want to shut down country's mills and factories," Begum Zia said in an oblique reference to the action programmes and agitation by jute and textile work-

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PM tells Indian envoy Rare opportunity for Dhaka, Delhi to better ties

Indian High Commissioner in Bangladesh K Raghunath called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday, reports BSS.

Raghunath, in his first meeting with the Prime Minister as the new High Commissioner, conveyed her good wishes and felicitations of Indian President R Venkatarman and Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao.

He said the people of India were eagerly waiting to extend a warm and fraternal welcome to Begum Zia.

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DUCSU holds students' convention today

Dhaka University Central Students Union (DUCSU) will hold a students' convention at the Institute of Engineers' (IEB) today, reports BSS.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will open the convention at 10 am. DUCSU sources said, adding that the convention will be attended by elected office bearers of all colleges and universities of the country.

"Consolidate democracy by uprooting terrorism, anarchy and conspiracy" is the slogan of today's convention. A similar convention, with the slogan

"down with autocracy" was held on October 1, 1990, under the auspices of present DUCSU which was attended by 2,731 elected representatives from 268 colleges and six universities of the country.

Our Staff Correspondent adds: Leaders of student unions of various universities in the country in a statement Saturday expressed surprise over a call for a students' convention by the DUCSU.

The leaders also mentioned that they had no involvement in such a convention called by

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One stabbed on DU campus

An expelled activist of the pro-JSD (Inu) Chhatra League was stabbed Saturday by his colleague at TSC of Dhaka University, reports UNB.

Anwar Hossain Rousseau, a 3rd year student of Geology and resident of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall, was rushed to a private clinic after the noon-time stabbing.

Witnesses said a group of youngmen of a rival faction of the organisation suddenly attacked and knifed him.

Rousseau was ousted from BCL recently for his alleged involvement in anti-organisational activities and gunfight between its two factions.

Suchinda leaves country

BANGKOK, May 23: Suchinda Kraprayoon left here late Saturday for Copenhagen after resigning as Prime Minister of Thailand over the crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators, sources said, reports AFP.

Suchinda's resignation and departure have not been officially announced.

speculation that he was about to go into exile.

Reliable sources said that Suchinda informed King Bhumibol Adulyadej of his resignation in an audience Friday night but the official announcement was being delayed as negotiations continued over the fate of Suchinda's right-hand men—the army chief and supreme commander.

Talks to decide which military leaders must be axed ran into trouble, Thai and Western sources said.

Reuters says, Suchinda prepared to go into exile but de-

clayed his departure to win amnesty for troops who fired on demonstrators in an attempt to keep him in office, political sources said on Sunday.

"He does not want to leave before the amnesty issue is settled," a parliamentary source said, "he does not want to leave his friends in trouble."

Soldiers killed scores of people when they opened fire on pro-democracy demonstrators in Bangkok, the protesters were trying to oust Suchinda, a former supreme

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National body to involve women in development likely

By Sohel Manzur

The government plans to set up a National Council of Women in Development (NCWD) with a view to bringing the women of the country into the mainstream of development.

The NCWD will be headed by the President of Bangladesh and will have an executive committee and a standing committee based in the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Women's Affairs respectively.

The main function of the

Court rejects bail prayers of Obhi, 15 associates

By Court Correspondent

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Shahiduddin Ahmed Saturday rejected the bail prayer of Golam Farooq Obhi and his 15 associate and sent them to the Dhaka Central Jail custody.

Obhi and his 15 associates were produced under heavy security to the CMM court after three days' police remand.

Separate bail petitions were moved for the accused persons.

The court after hearing rejected the bail prayers and

sent the accused persons to jail custody.

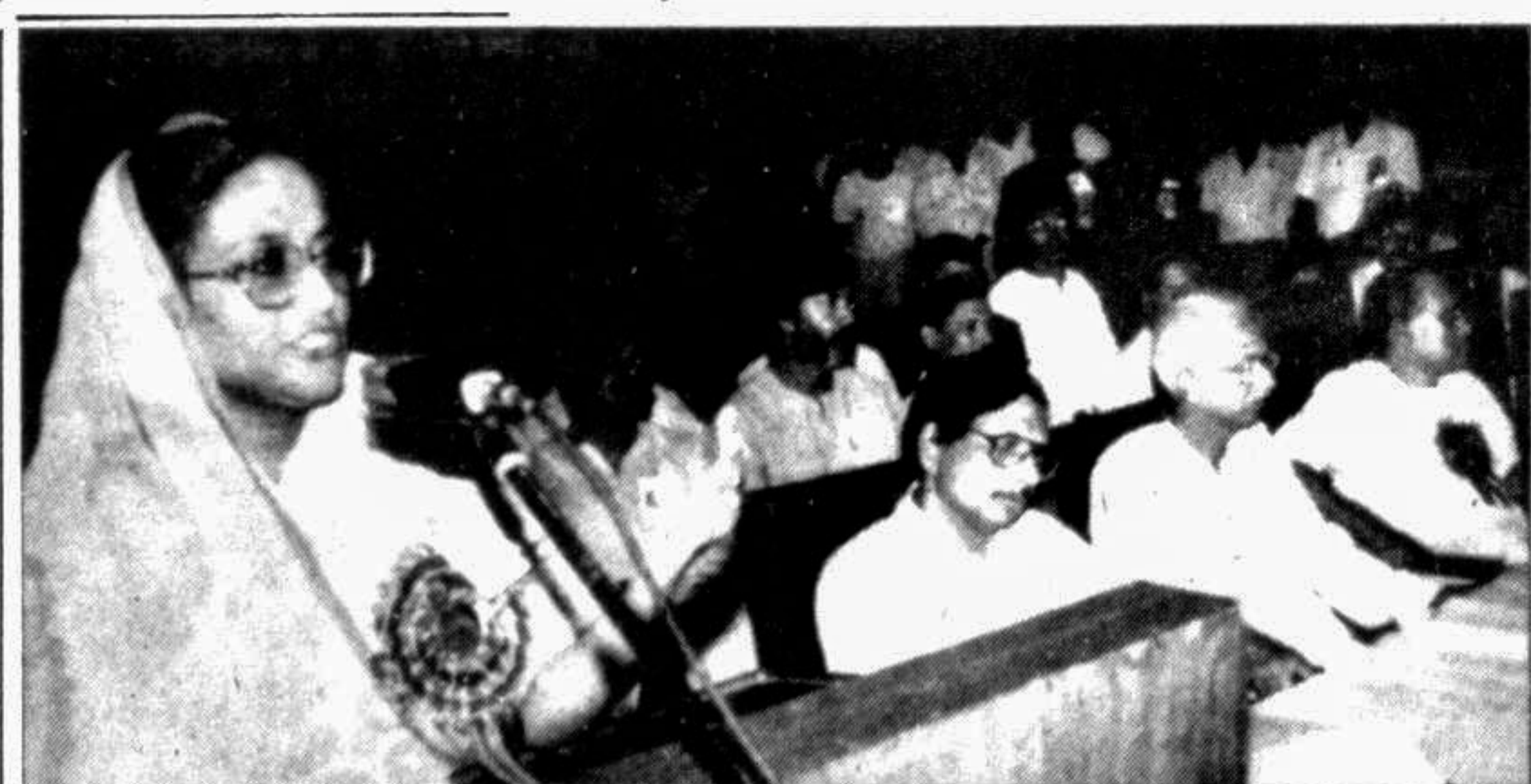
The defence lawyers argued that accused Obhi and his associates were brutally tortured during police remand.

They further argued that the accused were falsely implicated in this case and therefore the case was baseless and concocted.

Obhi, the principal accused alleged that he was innocent.

He further stated that he had suffered two and half years

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Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina addressing the conference of Railway Sramik League at Engineers Institution yesterday. —Star photo