

US ready to mediate Kashmir dispute

Star Report

The United States is willing to mediate in the Kashmir dispute provided both India and Pakistan seek its good offices for resolving the 45-year-old problem, according to the Office of the US Assistant Secretary of State.

However, in a briefing paper on the subject from the State Department in Washington, just made available in Dhaka by the USIS, the Clinton administration reaffirmed that it is frequently keeping in touch with both New Delhi and Islamabad on the disputed issue, and at senior levels.

Answering a question, the paper observed that "India and Pakistan should work together to resolve the dispute, taking into account the wishes of the people of Kashmir."

Following is the text of the briefing paper on a question-and-answer format:

Q: Has the US offered to mediate in the Kashmir dispute?

A: The United States has discussed Kashmir with India and Pakistan frequently, and at senior levels. We believe that India and Pakistan should work together to resolve the dispute, taking into account the wishes of the people of Kashmir.

If both sides were to request it, we would be prepared to be helpful in this process, but we have not offered to mediate this long-standing dispute.

Q: Has the US contacted Pakistan about a possible one-time inspection of its nuclear facilities?

A: We have long urged the Government of Pakistan to accept International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards on all its nuclear facilities.

This would naturally include periodic IAEA inspections. However, we have had no contact with Pakistan about a possible one-time inspection of its nuclear facilities.

Meanwhile, another briefing paper from Geneva reported that representatives of some 160 governments attending a conference on the protection of war victims called on the international community to "ensure that war crimes are duly prosecuted and do not go unpunished."

Delegates to the

International Conference for the Protection of War Victims adopted a draft declaration September 1 condemning the increasingly widespread violations of humanitarian law, especially violence against civilians.

The conference's final declaration reaffirms the principles of the humanitarian law embodied in the 1949 Geneva Convention — international treaties intended to safeguard respect for both combatants and civilians in times of conflict.

It calls on governments to take "resolute action" against states "bearing responsibility for violations for international humanitarian law."

The Swiss government, the depository state of the Geneva Conventions, has been asked to convene an open-ended inter-governmental group of experts "to study practical means of promoting full compliance" with the conventions, which most of the world's nations have signed.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata told the conference, "We have passed the threshold of what is tolerable in modern warfare, especially as regards the treatment of civilian populations."

She said the ICRC and her own agency are now faced with "shockingly frequent and blatant disregard of the most elementary humanitarian principles."

Warren Zimmermann, the director of the State Department's Bureau for Refugee Programmes, said he believes the conference succeeded in focusing international attention on the plight of war victims.

"I think we are seeing a new level of violence and atrocity that we have not seen in a long time," the former US ambassador to Yugoslavia said in an interview following the conference.

He attributed the increase in violence in part to the rise of nationalism, "which is in itself a kind of doctrine which creates hostility to other national groups."

Zimmermann led the US delegation to the three-day conference, which was convened by the Swiss government and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Maneka Gandhi

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Maneka said Third World nations should make all-out efforts to alleviate poverty which was one of the main reasons for environmental imbalances in those countries.

She was also against the adoption of the Western model of education, saying education should be technical and functional.

She said the sub-continent had inherited a colonial bureaucracy and ideology which was not appropriate for the region.

"After 30 or 40 years, we have realised that almost all the government policies are wrong and environmentally unhealthy. We must formulate policies according to our culture and economy."

Regarding the major environmental problems existing in the sub-continent, she said each and every development process was ecologically unfit.

She also said women in South Asia should involve themselves in active politics for their own emancipation.

Maneka Gandhi, who entered politics after the death of her husband Sanjay Gandhi, younger son of former Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi, and later involved herself in environmental activities, called upon the women to participate in politics but "not as a widow or a daughter of a politician."

"The women from the grass-roots level should take part in politics as individual entities," she said.

Women in India and Bangladesh play a significant role in environmental management but she regretted that the girl children are not getting opportunity for schooling because they have to do household chores all the day.

Maneka termed the relationship between Bangladesh and India "wonderful", saying that the people of both countries had almost similar cultures and good contacts among themselves.

The press conference was also attended by Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelly and Hasna Moudud of National Association for Resource Improvement (NARI), an NGO.

Earlier in the morning

Maneka Gandhi, a former State Minister for Environment under VP Singh, said the Farakka is-

sue should be resolved to prevent environmental degradation in Bangladesh.

"I know the untold problems of Bangladesh due to the Farakka barrage. I wish to do something... I shall try my best to take initiatives towards solving the problem," she said while addressing a workshop on "Women and Environment".

The workshop was arranged by NARI under sponsorship of the Norwegian development agency NORAD to help implement Agenda 21 relating to women adopted at the Rio Earth Summit.

Earlier, she inaugurated an exhibition of handicraft at the hotel.

Monwar Hossain, Managing Director of MARC, an NGO, presented the keynote paper in the workshop presided over NARI president Hasna Moudud.

In his paper Hossain emphasised that women should play leading roles in education, analysis, research, and dissemination, and agitation at local, regional and global levels and economic empowerment.

Peasant's Day

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farmers, reduction of diesel oil price, availability of quality seeds and fair prices and a sound marketing system for agricultural products.

The text of the memorandum, drafted by the AL leaders working with the party's peasant front, received approval of the AL's central working committee (CWC) on September 1.

According to the CWC decision, the memo will be signed by AL chief Sheikh Hasina and addressed to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

According to party insiders, the petition will accuse the government of completely ignoring the interests of the peasants and blame the government's agriculture policy for the present "miseries" of the farmers.

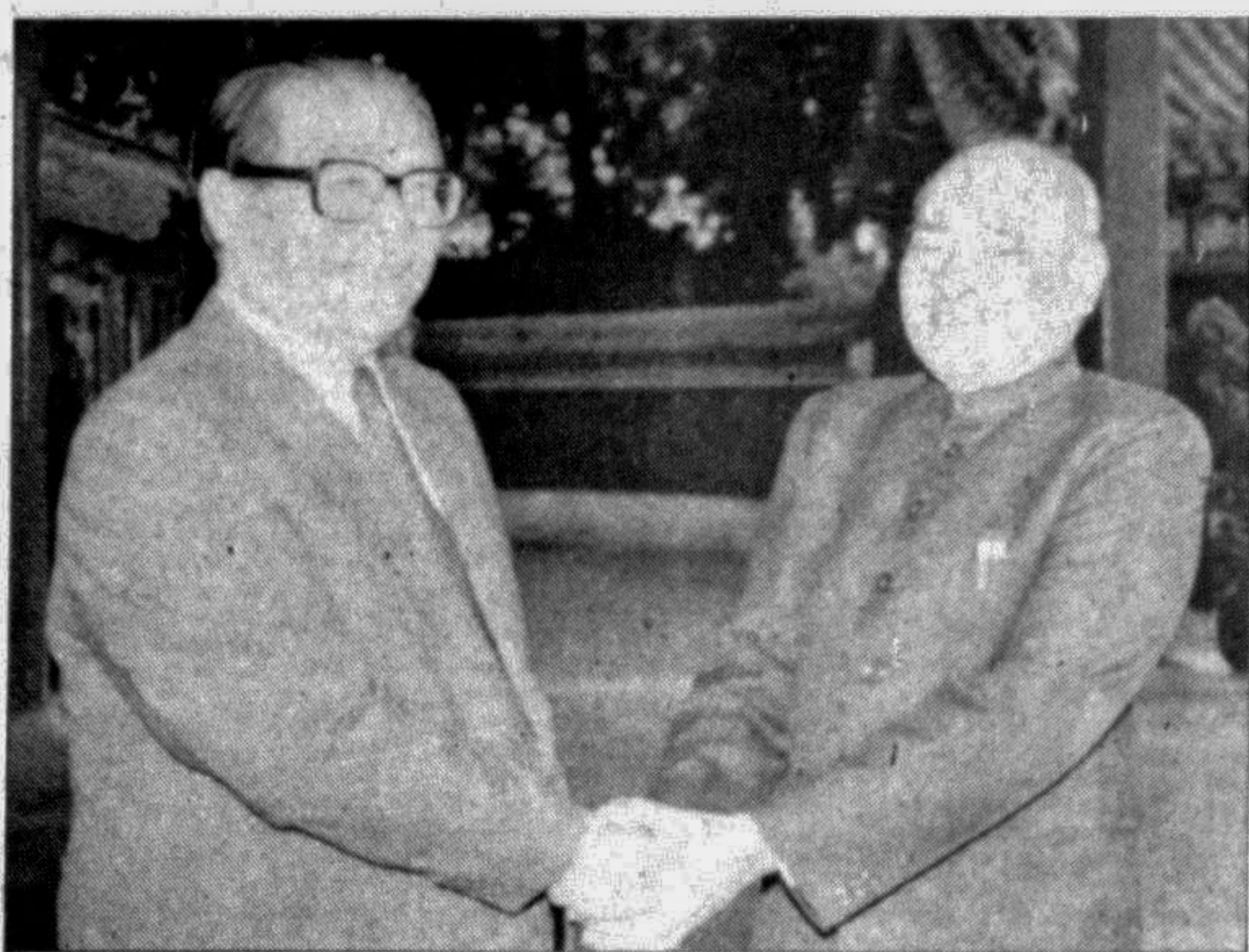
AL central working body members and party MPs have already left for their respective localities on September 6 to make today's programme a success.

According to sources in the party, the AL policy-makers believe the peasants movement is not only important for the country's economic uplift, it would also help the party win the next parliamentary polls.

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Chinese President Jiang Zemin (L) welcoming visiting Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao at the Zhongnanhai leadership compound yesterday. — AFP photo

DU punishes 628 students for cheating

By DU Correspondent

The Dhaka University disciplinary council recently took various punitive measures against 628 students for cheating in different examinations under the university.

Of the 628 examinees, 329 students of the Dhaka University itself will not be able to appear in any examinations for a year for adopting unfair means while eight others have been barred for two years.

Seven accused of adopting unfair means, however, were found not guilty and acquitted. Those punished include 169 students of the Jagannath College, 158 of the Karatia Sadat College, six of the Eden Girls' College, 21 of the Mymensingh Ananda Mohan College, one student of the Dhaka College, three of the Barisal B M College, 10 from different halls of the Dhaka University, 244 external candidates, seven of the Government Homeopathic College and nine examinees of the Bangladesh Homeopathic College.

The punished students took part in the 1990 degree Honours Examinations under the traditional system, the First Part Masters Examinations of 1990, the Final Year Masters of 1989, the First Part BHMS Examination and Final Year BHMS Examination of 1986.

GF's campaign

From Page 1 Col 8

the party, held at a local hotel last night, expressed deep concern over the recent incidents which forced closure of some universities and colleges.

The meeting, presided over by Forum president Dr Kamal Hossain, discussed different aspects of the five-point demand. The GF has already given an ultimatum to the parliamentary committee, constituted for curbing campus violence, for taking a decision towards ending the menace by October 11.

The meeting also discussed the interim constitution of the party and programmes presented at the national grand convention to pinpoint the problems and their possible solutions.

In a press briefing Dr Kamal said personality cult in politics was the main obstacle to development of the Third World countries.

"Taking this into account, we have to break this trend. The Gano Forum has adopted the policy of collective leadership to implement a new-third programme for development of the country," he said.

Dr Kamal said, "Democracy in the party is our principle and team work is our main strength".

Speaking on the duties of the members of the Presidium and the Secretariat, the Forum chief said the meeting was working for distribution of responsibilities which would be announced today.

Gold smugglers in police remand

By Staff Correspondent

Five persons accused of smuggling gold were yesterday remanded to Ramna police custody for two days.

On a prayer by Ramna police, the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate granted a two-day police remand for each of the five accused — Mohammad Jamal Uddin, Sultan Ahmed, Gofran, Hakim Mohammad Elias, and Hafez Abu Bakar.

A customs intelligence team recovered 300 tolas of gold from Jamal Uddin at the Daudkandi ferry-ghat when he, along with the four others, was going to Feni from Dhaka by a car Sunday. Jamal Uddin returned from Jeddah Saturday.

They were arrested by Ramna police under customs law.

Zahir tells BEA seminar Less bureaucracy means more development

By Staff Correspondent

Planning Minister A M Zahiruddin Khan yesterday said despite the free market economy pursued by the government, the country still needs some degree of planned approach to development because of infrastructure problems and social reality.

At the same time he warned that the country could not afford laissez-faire.

However, he made it clear there was no way of going back to a centralised economy as envisaged immediately after Liberation by the policy planners.

He also castigated the then economists for failing to formulate proper policies during the formative stages of the country which, he said, was responsible for slow growth of the economy.

The minister was speaking at a workshop on "Structural Reform for Self-reliant Development of Bangladesh" organised by the Bangladesh Economic Association (BEA) at the Planning Academy here.

"The political parties did not think of the people and the economists failed to formulate policies that would create an environment for growth," the Planning Minister said.

He also blamed the bureaucratic system for failing to give any positive direction to the country saying that less bureaucratic control encourages more development.

"The bureaucrats always assume that they know all the answers while others know nothing," Khan said. "But please, take the people into consideration," he appealed to the civil servants.

He blamed inward-looking policies and over control for sluggish growth in the region. "We need reforms to get rid of this over intervention," the minister said.

He outlined the government's new development perspective which he said aims at sustainable economic development with a focus on human resource development, participatory plan-

ning and poverty alleviation. "The economy is undergoing considerable structural adjustments initiated over the last two years, which have brought about substantial macro stability."

The Planning Minister reiterated that the government is aware of the need for increased self-reliance in financing its development programmes. He mentioned that internal resource mobilisation in the development programmes has increased from nil to about 33 per cent in 1993-94.

Earlier, the president of BEA, Prof Anisur Rahman and Debopriya Bhattacharya of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) addressed the inaugural session.

Prof Anisur Rahman said the foreign assistance that flowed into the country since independence had failed to make any impression on the country's development process, rather a section of the people had become disproportionately rich.

He pointed out that the structural reform programme, as prescribed by the developed world, had backfired in most underdeveloped countries which have become more and more poverty stricken.

"We have also taken up the free market economy this year, but the farmers have become the victims of this system," Rahman said.

"Time has come for us to decide our own policy for development," Prof Rahman said. "Self-reliance is the best way of development and no country in the world has ever prospered by begging."

He also urged the country's economists to play their due role in development.

The inaugural session over, the workshop discussed a technical concept paper on poverty alleviation and self-reliant development by Prof Rahman.

(See summary of the concept paper by Prof Anisur Rahman on Business Page)

10 recruiting agencies' licences cancelled

and Messrs Babu Bhai and Co Dhaka.

Agencies whose activities have been suspended are: Messrs Young Star Syndicate, Dhaka, Messrs Sunrise International, Dhaka, Messrs Khwaza Recruiting International, Agency Bangladesh, Dhaka, Messrs Rajdham Overseas, Dhaka, Messrs Okister, Dhaka, Messrs Famous International, Dhaka, Messrs Happy International, Dhaka, Messrs Babbi Associate, Dhaka and Messrs Red Rose International, Dhaka.

These information were revealed at a meeting of the standing committee on the Labour and Manpower Ministry with Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in the chair.

The meeting was also informed that 1,53,453 persons went abroad from January to July of the current year and during this period the wage earners' remittances worth Tk 2,247 crore were received. During the same period last year 104,518 persons went abroad and they remitted Tk 2,080 crore, the handout added.

The recruiting agencies whose licences were cancelled are: Messrs Popular Trade (Bangladesh) Ltd, Dhaka, Messrs Palash Enterprise, Dhaka, Messrs M Hossain and Co Dhaka, Messrs M A F International Enterprise, Dhaka, Messrs Wiener International, Dhaka, Messrs Al-Farid Trade International, Dhaka, Messrs Al-Nakir International, Dhaka, Messrs Al-Maher International, Dhaka

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Saifur seeks Bonn's help for poverty alleviation

BONN, Sept 7: Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman today met German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development Carl-Dieter Spranger and congratulated him for the unification of Germany and the success with which the German government has overcome difficulties inherent in the process, reports BSS.

He also thanked the German government for bilateral cooperation with Bangladesh despite its own internal problems.

Saifur Rahman requested for German assistance to priority sectors like poverty alleviation, primary education, rural electrification and the railways.

The German minister pledged continuing German assistance in these sectors and assured to consider the proposals during the forthcoming annual consultations, to be held in December. The two ministers also discussed the Flood Action plan and a proposed credit line for small and cottage industries.

The German Minister appreciated the macro stability in Bangladesh and the success in increasing food production. He assured the Bangladesh Finance Minister of continuing support to sustain the results achieved so far.

Earlier, Monday, Saifur Rahman met Prof. Dr Uwe Holt, chairman of the Bundestag (Parliament) Committee on Economic Cooperation.

Saifur Rahman was later interviewed by the German press and radio.

BM College closed as JCD, BCL clash

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Sept 7: The authorities have closed down the Government Brojo Mohan (BM) College for four days following a violent clash between two rival student groups today.

At least 10 students were injured when activists of the Jatyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) clashed on the college campus, witnesses said.

They said the clash ensued following hot altercation during processions of the two student organisations this noon.

Varsity teachers' strike today

By DU Correspondent

The country's university teachers will observe a day-long strike today demanding arrest and trial of the persons involved in the violence at two universities in the last.

The examinations scheduled for today will, however, be exempted from the strike.

Literacy Day

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for all to make a fresh vow to free the country from the curse of illiteracy.

A rally will begin from the National Museum at 7:30 am today and end at the National Press Club. Deputy Leader of the House Prof A Q M Badruddin Chowdhury will lead it.

Representatives of different agencies and organisations, Information Minister Barister Nazmul Huda and Mayor of Dhaka City Mirza Abbas, MP, will join the march.

The Primary and Mass Education Department will organise a discussion on "Strategy for Implementing Education for All" programme at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium at 10:30 am.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will be present as chief guest at the function, to be attended by ministers and diplomats.

Besides, ministers, state ministers, deputy ministers, whips and MPs in charge of respective districts will attend as chief guests similar functions at thana and district levels.

DCCI chief slates NBR order

By Staff Correspondent

The president of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI), A T M Wazilullah, in a statement yesterday, said the various conditions imposed along with bank guarantee in the SRO issued by the National Board of Revenue (NBR) regarding exemption of import duties and taxes on capital machinery is completely frustrating for the businessmen.

The DCCI president said the SRO is completely contrary to the Prime Minister's announcement that the government is actively considering exemption of import duties and taxes on capital machinery for all industries.

He said it will have an adverse impact on the country's industrialisation.

Wazilullah also demanded nullification of the SRO for the country's rapid industrialisation.

The rally was also addressed, among others, by Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, MP, Zillur Rahman, Siddique Hossain, Abduljalil and others.

The Midnight File

Israelis protest peace deal

JERUSALEM, Sept 7: Thousands of Israeli protestors opposed to the pending Israel-Palestine Liberation Organization peace plan gathered outside the prime minister's office Tuesday, vowing to blockade it for 24 hours. About 10,000 people gathered at the start of the demonstration. Protest organizers predicted that the crowd would swell to over 100,000 as the night wore on, as demonstrators arrived on hundreds of buses from all over Israel, reports AP.

Three more German states ban imperial war flag

MAGDEBURG (Germany), Sept 7: Three German states banned the former German imperial war flag on Tuesday, bringing to six the number of states to outlaw the banner that has appeared frequently at neo-Nazi gatherings. Berlin, Saxony, Anhalt in eastern Germany and North-Rhine Westphalia in western Germany were the latest to join the ban, reports AP.

Sanctions against S Africa to be lifted by month end

JOHANNESBURG, Sept 7: International sanctions against the White minority South African government will be lifted by the end of September, African National Congress national chairman Thabo Mbeki said today. Addressing delegates to a US trade fair at the World Trade Centre here, Mbeki said the move was linked to impending agreement by democracy negotiators on the structure of a Transitional Executive Council (TEC) that will see South Africa through to non-racial elections next April 27, reports AFP.

Opposition parties

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ing harassed.

Leaders of other parliamentary opposition parties, while talking to the Star, said they would strongly support the bill in keeping with their opposition to the law since its enactment.

The parliamentary wings of the Jatiya Party, the Jamaat-e-Islami and the smaller parliamentary group like the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), the Ganatantri Party, the Workers' Party and the JSD (Siraj) will also take up the issue for discussion.

Opposition sources believe they might even win support of some treasury benches since, as they put it, many innocent workers of the ruling BNP were also often being harassed by this particular piece of legislation because of intra-party conflicts.

Jatiya Party (JP) leader Barrister Moudud Ahmed said: "We'll fully support the AL-sponsored bill because it's a matter of common concern for the opposition."

Favouring a combined opposition move in the House, Barrister Moudud further said, "Surely, we will have to stand united on the issue as the repeal of the law is a popular demand." "I'm hopeful that a good number of treasury benches

tioned the best relations that was existing between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and underlined the need for expanding trade relations between the two nations.

The Sri Lankan minister said Bangladesh had an immense potential in the tourism sector. Both the countries could closely cooperate to develop tourism industry in Bangladesh, he said.

Cooray appreciated the warm reception and hospitality extended to him during his stay and conveyed the greetings of the Sri Lankan President and the Prime Minister to Begum Zia.

Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Mian and Sri Lankan Ambassador Ahmed N Haniffa were present.

Tk 10 cr plan

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an adverse impact on economy. Policy-makers, however, believe that the loss can still be recovered with intensive cultivation of transplanted Aman, Boro and other Rabi crops.

Experts say the fertility of arable lands inundated by the flood waters will have increased and should contribute to enhanced production.

Ministry sources claim there is enough stock of seeds and seedlings to meet the farmers' requirements and there is no need to import.

To implement this rehabilitation programme, district-level committees headed by the DCs have been formed to handle the distribution of agricultural inputs among the farmers.

Special arrangements have been made to provide cash grants to needy farmers in the affected areas, said the source, adding that the process of disbursement of funds have also been simplified.

Earlier, when the floods struck greater Sylhet in June-July, the government sanctioned two crore Take for agricultural rehabilitation in the districts while another three crore taka were sanctioned for other parts of the country.

The recurring floods since June this year have affected 1.14 crore people of 1680 unions in 33 districts. According to official statistics, 162 persons died in the floods. Nearly 2.