

PM tells Nepalese MPs

Tripartite talks to help solve water issue

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said the three countries — India, Bangladesh and Nepal — should discuss an amicable solution to the water issue, reports UNB.

She called for further deepening relations among the seven SAARC nations by resolving all irritants touching them.

"We should overcome the issues that are creating distance among us," she said while talking to the visiting Speaker of Nepal, Damanath Dhungana, when he called on her at Prime Minister's office yesterday.

Damanath Dhungana is leading an 11-member parliamentary delegation which arrived here Sunday.

"Under the changed world circumstances, we all have to work together in much closer cooperation for solving socio-economic problems in the region," said Begum Zia, current Chairperson of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

"As chairperson I will try my best to make the relations among the SAARC countries more cordial," the Prime Minister told the Nepalese lawmakers.

The Prime Minister detailed the on-going development pro-

grammes of her government. She said, the government was functioning with total accountability to the people and the parliament.

The Nepalese Speaker expressed his happiness to see that both the ruling party and opposition in Bangladesh are unanimous in the parliament to work for alleviating poverty from the society.

Mrs Bhuvan Daman Dhungana and other members of the delegation including members of parliament belonging to four different political parties of Nepal were present.

Later the Nepalese parliamentary delegation had a meeting with leading members of Bangladesh parliament at the Sangsad Bhaban.

Bangladesh side was led by Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali while the Nepalese delegation was headed by Speaker Daman Nath Dhungana.

During the meeting, they exchanged views about the functioning of parliaments in the two countries. The two sides also discussed procedural matters regarding placing of budget, government bills, private members' bills and functioning of various committees.

JS prorogued

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saw malice and hatred in some Opposition members' behaviour and said, after the AL legislators had walked out, that despite difference on ways and means of making parliamentary democracy effective, there was no room in a democracy for malice and hatred against anyone.

The Deputy Leader requested the chair to expunge the 'unparliamentary' remarks of Samad Azad.

Works Minister Barrister Rafiqul Islam Miah said the ruling on judgement of the Speaker cannot be questioned in the House. He regretted the way some Awami League leaders attacked the chair.

Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda observed that the walkout staged by the AL, Jamaat and the JP was consistent with their previous unholy alliance and was aimed at frustrating democracy.

It all began when the Deputy Speaker ignored AL MP Matia Chowdhury's appeal for the floor to protest State Minister for Finance Mofizur Rahman's advice to exclude her from the concerned parliamentary standing committee.

Matia Chowdhury had earlier told the House that the standing committee on the Finance Ministry had been made ineffective by the ruling party members and demanded that the committees be made more active and that all bills should come through the respective committees.

The State Minister, while replying to the criticism, commented that the efficacy of the parliamentary committees depended not just on the ruling party members' goodwill. He

Financial Instn Bill adopted

A bill providing for strict laws to make the Bangladesh Bank's controlling authority effective over the non-banking financial institutions and ensuring financial discipline there was adopted by the Jatiya Sangsad last night, reports BSS.

With the passage of the Financial Institutions Bill, 1993, the 'Chapter Five' of the 1972 Bangladesh Bank order has been repealed.

Piloted by the State Minister for Finance, Mofizur Rahman, the bill will come into force with retrospective effect on August 16, 1993 (when an ordinance was promulgated in this regard).

The implementation of the legislation will help bring about 'qualitative and economic development' in the national economy and moreover the people will be encouraged and the people's confidence enhanced in the investment with the non-banking financial institutions, the statement of object and reasons of the bill said.

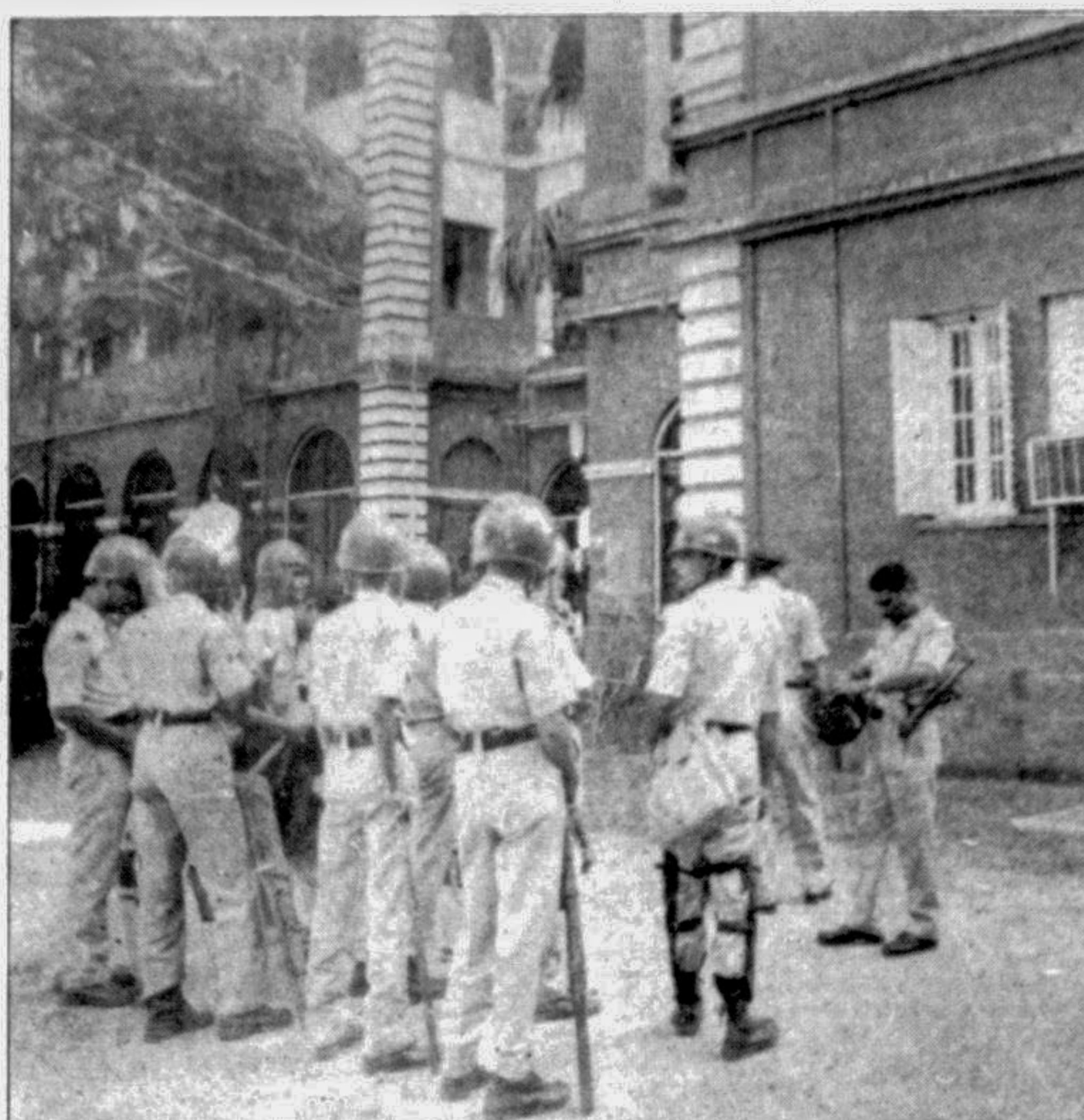
The House rejected all the amendments moved by the Opposition after about two hours of discussions on the bill.

Opposition members criticised the bill saying it proposed to raise the power and authority of the Bangladesh Bank without providing safe guards against the abuse of power and authority. It would also breed corruption in the banking sector, they said.

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Police in riot-gear step up vigil around Sir Salimullah Medical College as tension prevailed on the campus yesterday. — Star photo

JUTA condemns govt failure

By JU Correspondent

The Jahangirnagar University Teachers' Association (JUTA) yesterday criticised the government for the recently submitted police final report regarding the cases against some of their colleagues.

Reiterating their demand for unconditional withdrawal of the cases filed against ten teachers by a student, the executive body of the JUTA said the government had kept some of the cases alive on purpose.

The JUTA sought proper application of the judicial process against the real 'criminals', as promised by the standing committee of Parliament on September 22.

In a press release, the JUTA said the Home Minister had promised to withdraw the 'false and defamatory charges' against the teachers and ensure the immediate arrests of the 21 students accused of campus violence within a 72-hour deadline which terminated on September 25.

Sources said, the Savar police reportedly exempted the teachers from only four of the six charges levelled against them by some students saying that necessary investigation was not possible since the institution had remained closed.

Meanwhile, the planned sit-in demonstration of the university teachers, scheduled on October 5, before the Prime Minister's office may be deferred because the PM is likely to be out of the country at that time, one teacher said.

22 killed as Pak, Afghan tribes clash

ISLAMABAD, Sept 27: At least 22 people were killed and four injured as a fierce gunbattle erupted between Afghan and Pakistani tribes in the northwestern Dera Ismail Khan district, the Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) said today, reports AFP.

The official news agency reported tension in the area bordering Afghanistan as rivals were regrouping for another showdown after the clash involving the Afghan 'Pawindas' and Pakistani 'Gandapur' tribes Sunday.

Project to convert garbage into bio-gas soon, JS told

The government will soon take up a pilot project to produce bio-gas from garbage collected from different parts of the city, reports UNB.

Responding to a call attention from Advocate Abdul Matin Khan of the Awami League, Deputy Minister for LOR and Cooperatives Abdul Hye informed Parliament yesterday that the authorities concerned have also acquired 72 acres of land at Matuail in Demra thana for garbage disposal in a scientific manner.

The deputy minister admitted that dumping of garbage at Jatrabari had posed a serious health hazard to the people in the area, because of the poisonous gases emitted including methane, and 'unbearable stench'.

Tension at SSMC as ICS men stage come back

By SSMCH Correspondent

Tension continued to prevail on the Sir Salimullah Medical College campus as the ousted ICS men returned to the campus to join the Academic Council's meeting.

The Council met yesterday morning with the college Principal Prof Mujibur Rahman in the chair to review the situation obtaining in the campus.

Members of the All-Party Students' Unity (APSU), Sir Salimullah Medical College Students' Union (SSMCSU) and teachers' representatives were present in the meeting.

The ICS activists, numbering around 25, requested the college administration to provide them security in their respective hostels.

General students under the banner of the APSU staged a demonstration when the Academic Council was in session, demanding ouster of the ICS cadres.

Witnesses said, the demonstrators kicked at the door of the Principal's room where the meeting was being held.

"They are kicking at me, not on the door," the Principal was

overheard telling the ICS members, witnesses added.

The Council had, in principle, agreed to permit the 'ousted' students to return to their rooms and asked the APSU leaders to refrain from threatening the ICS members, sources said.

The Principal will decide today whether the institution will remain open or not.

Some students at a meeting alleged the Principal was bowing to the pressures of the Home Minister.

"Closing down of the institution may jeopardise the British General Medical Council recognition," the students claimed. The college, in the older section of the city, is one of the four medical colleges recognised by the GMC.

Meanwhile, the APSU leaders said that a suspicious movement of outsiders had increased around the Mitford Hospital.

APSU leaders were also apprehending attacks from the pro-Jamaat students' wing.

A large contingent of police was deployed in the three men's hostels of the college.

Zahir explains reasons for monetary reforms

Convertibility of the Taka will create confidence in the strength of the Bangladesh currency and her economic management which will attract foreign investment, Industries Minister AM Zahiruddin Khan said yesterday, reports UNB.

The present policy commitment to follow a free market mechanism with an export-led strategy for economic growth further stimulated the process of the convertibility concept, he told the inaugural session of a discussion on deregulation of foreign exchange at the Metropolitan Chamber.

"The convertibility approach is being supported because we have the lowest inflation in South Asia, the Tax-GDP ratio at 8 per cent is ris-

ing, the investment-GDP is at a healthy 13 per cent, the budgetary deficit has shrunk, and most important of all, the foreign exchange reserve of over 2 billion dollar is an all-time high."

Further explaining the reasons for the monetary reforms, Khan said full convertibility would mean free floating of the Taka with least intervention of the central bank, making foreign exchange freely available for transactions.

He said the present stage of convertibility would ensure a managed floating or fixation by the central bank against some intervening currency, allowing that rate to fluctuate by certain percentage above or below the prescribed rate.

'Taka to become stronger with convertibility'

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sought a clarification on the definition of convertibility and what was actually meant by a market determined exchange rate.

Venkataraman replied that an important element in current account convertibility is currency exchange without having to go through the central bank.

Former Governor of Bangladesh Bank S B Chowdhury wanted to know if the Taka would be placed under a free float or on a reference rate set by the central bank and, in an import-dependent economy, wouldn't a free float lead to a sharp decline in the value of the local currency?

Without a free float convertibility is a myth, Venkataraman said, adding "Float is the answer to the problem if you are import-dependent".

S H Kabir, Managing Director of Renata Pharmaceuticals, asked if there is cause for concern over the inflow and outflow of currency due to interest rate differences.

There would be some movement of currency due to interest rate differences,

Venkataraman explained, but it would not be much.

Salman Rahman pointed out that if the Taka strengthens then exports would be affected. Advocating the institution of a subsidy mechanism if the Taka appreciates, he sarcastically added "But it (subsidy) is an enigma to our masters in Washington", obliquely referring to the World Bank.

He also expressed his 'serious' apprehension about the banking system's ability to handle free float of the currency.

The executive director of the Bangladesh Bank Abdur Raquib said: "I don't see any apprehensions of free float as we already have convertibility on current account, so what we will perhaps announce on October 1 is the achievements we have already made and that we are ready for capital account convertibility."

The Managing Director of Janata Bank Md Taheruddin, however, pointed out that internal structural deficiency would not immediately allow for a full free float.

Ashraf Ali, a General

Sec 144 prevents ICS, APSU meets in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Sept 27: Section 144 has been imposed on some areas here today as the Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) and the Chhatra Oikya (APSU) called simultaneous rallies at the same place today afternoon.

According to police, a few days back the ICS called a rally for today at Khalishpur and the All-Party Students Unity (APSU) yesterday called another rally at the same time there.

Section 144 was imposed to prevent clashes between the two opposing students' fronts' a Deputy Commissioner of Police said.

Meanwhile, the Chhatra Oikya and Islami Chhatra Shibir could not hold their scheduled rallies at Kashipur in the city today as authorities imposed Section 144 in the area to avoid untoward incidents.

Shibir leaders at a press conference in the evening, however, alleged that police had lost their neutrality by siding with the Chhatra Oikya.

They also brought out a procession in the city chanting slogans against the administration and demanding immediate arrest of those responsible for the September 20 incidents in which two students were killed at the BL college and Alia Madrasah.

Hartal observed partially in Rajshahi

RAJSHAHI, Sept 27: Half day hartal called by Jamaat-e-Islami, Rajshahi unit, was partially observed here today, reports BSS.

The hartal was called to press home the demand for the release of Ataur Rahman, Amir, Rajshahi unit of Jamaat-e-Islami and Shibir activists arrested during the last few days.

Many shops in the city were closed during hartal period. Production in mills and factories was, however, normal.

The hartal was peaceful and no untoward incident was reported.

Four killed in mishaps

By DMCH Correspondent

Two persons were killed in road mishaps and another two reportedly committed suicide in and outside of the city yesterday.

A minor boy was crushed under the wheels of a minibus at Khilkhet in the capital yesterday morning. The victim George Mia, 4, died on the spot, police said.

At Kamalapur, near Pirjanga Mazar, an auto-rickshaw driver was killed when his vehicle collided head-on with another three-wheeler.

The victim Gafur Mia, 30, was brought to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where he was declared dead by the doctors on duty.

Meanwhile, Tawhidul Islam, 20, reportedly strangled himself to death with a rope at Mirpur, Sunday evening. Police recovered the body yesterday and sent it to the DMCH morgue.

Another youngman Sujon, 28, allegedly took poison to commit suicide at Dhamrai, some 30 km from the capital.

All the bodies were sent to the DMCH morgue for autopsy.

Dacoity in Khulna

KHULNA, Sept 27: Armed dacoits stormed into a sales centre of Huq Battery in the city and looted cash and goods worth about Tk 68,000 today, reports UNB.

Police said a gang of five robbers, came by a micro bus, swooped on the shop at south centre road at about 10 am and decamped with cash and valuables, including gold, at gun point.

is very critical to the success of the convertibility process. Bangladesh Bank Deputy Governor Syed Kamaluddin said the forward cover should be provided to the authorised dealers, that is, the commercial banks.

In reply to a question, he also said that the foreign exchange control manual would be amended but it would not be removed right now.

Importers at the meeting noted the problems they are facing in taking advantage of the currency deregulation since the passbook or import entitlement regulation imposed on them does not allow them to switch banks to get a favourable deal in exchange rates.

Syed Kamaluddin said the regulation is imposed by the Commerce Ministry but assured that he would take it up with them.

MCCI president Latifur Rahman hoped that the central bank would take note of some of the problems raised at the discussion meeting and hoped that they would be solved in the near future.

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The Midnight File

Arafat on 'hit list'

JERUSALEM, Sept 27: A senior military figure told the Israeli Cabinet that PLO chief Yasser Arafat was on a "hit list" of opponents of the Israel-Palestinian peace accord, a newspaper reported Monday. "Yasser Arafat is on the hit list of opponents of the Israel-PLO accord," the Yediot Achronot daily quoted the officer as saying Sunday, without identifying him. "Opponents of the agreement in the territories are plotting to attack him," he added, according to the report, reports AP.

Tony Benn dropped from Labour's executive

BRIGHTON, Sept 27: Legislator Tony Benn, doyen of the British left, on Monday was dropped from the top committee of the Labour Party, a veteran casualty of the main opposition movement's shift to the center. Benn, a well-born socialist who renounced a hereditary title and who wants to abolish the monarch, was ousted from the National Executive Committee on the first day of Labour's week-long annual conference, reports AP.

Indian troops kill 8 in Kashmir

ISLAMABAD, Sept 27: At least eight civilians have been killed and 18 injured by Indian troops firing across the line dividing Indian and Pakistan-controlled Kashmir over the past two weeks, the official Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) said today. The agency quoted informed sources as saying "indiscriminate firing on innocent civilians in villages along the dividing line of control in Kashmir has been on the increase for sometime," reports AFP.

Storm hits Nandail thana: 1 killed, over 100 hurt

MYMENSINGH, Sept 27: A

woman was killed, a man was missing and more than a hundred people were wounded as a storm swept over nine villages in Nandail thana this afternoon, local people said, reports UNB.

The storm, packing wind speeds up to 120 kilometres per hour, lasted for about 15 minutes damaging more than 1,000 thatched houses and uprooting many trees.

Saleha Khatun, 35, wife of Gias Uddin of Hijojan village died in a house collapse and one Gandab Ali, 50, of Noapara village in Mushali union was reported missing.

Of the injured, five were admitted to the Myemensingh Medical College Hospital, 10 to the Kishoreganj Sadar Hospital and 20 to the Nandail Health Complex.

The storm-hit villages are: Pachardilla, Mesher Kanda, Hijojan, Darilla, Rajgati, Baril, Noapara and Mizbanail.

Leading Bosnian Muslims begin crucial debate

SARAJEVO, Sept 27: As battles over land intensified in northern Bosnia, leading Muslims began debate Monday on a plan to divide their nation and end its bitter civil war. One newspaper proclaimed the decision would mark a 'historic' day, reports AP.

The Bosnian Muslim Convention, comprised of some 350 people from all parts of society, was to cast a secret ballot Monday on a plan which would carve Bosnia into three ethnic mini-states for its Croats, Serbs and Muslims.

This could be a historic Monday for the Muslim nation because it is to decide about the direction of its new destiny," said an editorial carried by the Sarajevo daily Oslobodjenje.

Sukhumi falls

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The fall of Sukhumi was tantamount to the loss of the Abkhazian province and a sharp political blow to Shevardnadze, who personally led Georgian troops in the bloody ethnic war.

The separatists' victory could turn Georgians toward Shevardnadze's nationalist opponents and encourage other ethnic minorities across the Soviet Union to fight for independence.

Shevardnadze said much of the blame for the fall of Sukhumi fell on Russia, which has officially maintained neutrality, but is believed to have supplied some arms and other aid to Abkhazia.

"Georgia lost an unequal battle," he was quoted Monday by his office as saying. "We could have saved Sukhumi yesterday, but only Russia could do this and we sent an appeal to Moscow for such help."

He said that although Georgia begged for Russian assistance, none was forthcoming. "One of the reasons for Sukhumi's fall is that foreign forces played the cards of betrayal," he said.

Gulripsh, where the Georgian leader is reported to be, is on the Black Sea and has been one of the staging areas for the evacuation of refugees aboard Russian naval vessels.

Russian warships rescued about 3,500 refugees from Sukhumi and safely delivered them to the Russian port of Sochi and the Georgian port of Poti, the Itar-TASS news agency said Monday. It was the second evacuation of refugees by the Black Sea fleet in two days.

Both Georgian and Abkhazian forces agreed not to fire on the evacuation route and both sides held to the safe-passage guarantees.

Zillur accuses BNP of patronising Jamaat, Shibir

KALIGANJ (Gazipur), Sept

27: Awami League General Secretary Zillur Rahman today accused the ruling BNP of patronising the anti-Liberation elements to eliminate the pro-Liberation forces, reports UNB.

"The fundamentalist Jamaat-Shibir clique, being patronised by the government, is killing pro-Liberation people and unleashing terrorism in the country," the AL leader said.

He was addressing a memorial meeting at Kaliganj High School premises on the occasion of the 9th death anniversary of Moyezuddin Ahmed, a prominent Awami League leader who was killed during the Ershad regime.

Khaleda leaves

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Begum Zia, who is also the current chairman of SAARC, is expected to touch all major issues concerning the third world countries.

She is likely to focus on the achievements of her government in promoting socio-economic conditions of the people as well as consolidating the democratic dispensations in Bangladesh.

Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman, who is already in New York, will join the Prime Minister's entourage which includes members of the parliament Fatema Chowdhury, Shamsuddin, Shahidullah Khan, Manzoor Hossain and Amir Khashru, Attorney General Aminul Haque, Principal Secretary at the PM's Secretariat KM Rabbani, Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman, Director General (Economic) Iftikhar Ahmed Chowdhury and Director General (UN) Asfarul Kader of the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs and Press Secretary to Prime Minister Mozammel Haque.

Two brilliant students, ASM Rafique Ullah and Shimlin Sultana, will accompany the Prime Minister. Besides, a media team will also go to the UN headquarters to cover the visit.

On her way back home, the Prime Minister will address a meeting of the European-based Bangladeshi envoys in London on October 4. She is expected to return home on October 7.

HBFC borrowers

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tives including Dr Abdur

Rashid and Syed Abul Hashem. Other demands of the association included: providing special facilities such as rebate on interests for those who paid their instalments on time and satisfactorily, lowering bills for water supply, gas and electricity and different municipal taxes until the borrowers were debt-free, and the formation of a national sub-committee for the implementation of the association's proposals.

Rutskoi claimed Monday he would defend Parliament to "the last bullet", but some lawmakers and aides complained privately that Parliament's leaders did not know what to do and were increasingly desperate.

Reuter adds: Viktor Barannikov, named Security Minister by the Russian parliament in opposition to President Yeltsin, has defected to the Yeltsin camp, Itar-Tass news agency said today.

Tass reported that Barannikov had said that Andrei Danayev, named Interior Minister by parliament on Wednesday, has also left the building.

But Russian Khasbulatov today denied that two ministers appointed by the legislature had defected.

Yeltsin

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Rutskoi and Parliament speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov, have been holed up since Yeltsin ordered the legislature dissolved.

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