

# Hasina blasts BNP media blitz on development

GAIBANDHA, Dec 21: Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina today denounced BNP's media blitz on development and called it a cock and bull story, reports UNB.

"Development has taken place to the Prime Minister's relatives, her partymen and ministers... there has been development of corruption and terrorism," she said.

The Awami League chief was addressing a big public meeting at the Public Library Square here this afternoon. The meeting was presided over by Lutful Rahman, president of Gaibandha District Awami League.

The AL leader accused the BNP of misusing bank loans, foreign aid in collusion with the collaborators of previous autocratic regime and buying the nationalised mills and factories at throw-away prices.

She said the hard-earned democracy had been crippled with misrule, misuse of power, repression and terrorism sponsored by the ruling party.

Hasina said the Farakka problem remained unresolved for the subservient foreign pol-

# Banks must give up their traditional approach

By Staff Correspondent

Industries Minister M Zahuruddin Khan has said the banks will have to give up their traditional approach of banking and become more people-oriented for the greater interest of the country.

"We want a client-oriented banking, not the bank-oriented clients," the Minister said adding the problems of the country could not be solved through the traditional methods now being followed by the banks.

Zahuruddin Khan was addressing as chief guest the inaugural session of a seminar on "Banks and Small Scale Industries" in the city yesterday.

Organised by the Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management (BIBM), the seminar was addressed, by among others, the Director General of the BIBM AHM Nurul Islam and Faculty Member ATM Abdus Shahid with Deputy Governor of Bangladesh Bank ABM Mahbulul Amin Khan in the chair.

Referring to wide-spread irregularities in the banking sector, he said there was a tendency of favouring some people while lending money. The lending system has also been centralised in Dhaka he said adding this has been depriving the majority people of getting bank loans.

# Chakma refugees

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Asked about Japan's reported commitment to cofinance the Jamuna Bridge Project, he replied that he was not in a position to confirm but hoped it was true. The utility of the bridge has been explained by the government on several occasions and "our expectation from Japan in this regard is high", he said.

Asked about the proposed visit of the Indian premier Narasimha Rao, he expressed the hope that the visit will take place at the earliest.

Asked if the issue of water would be settled through the summit meeting, Osman said, "The issue may not be settled in one meeting, I can only be optimistic".

The two-day meeting of the Joint Economic Commission (JEC) between Bangladesh and India will begin in the capital on December 28.

The fourth meeting of the JEC will discuss a wide array of economic issues between the two countries, the Foreign Secretary said.

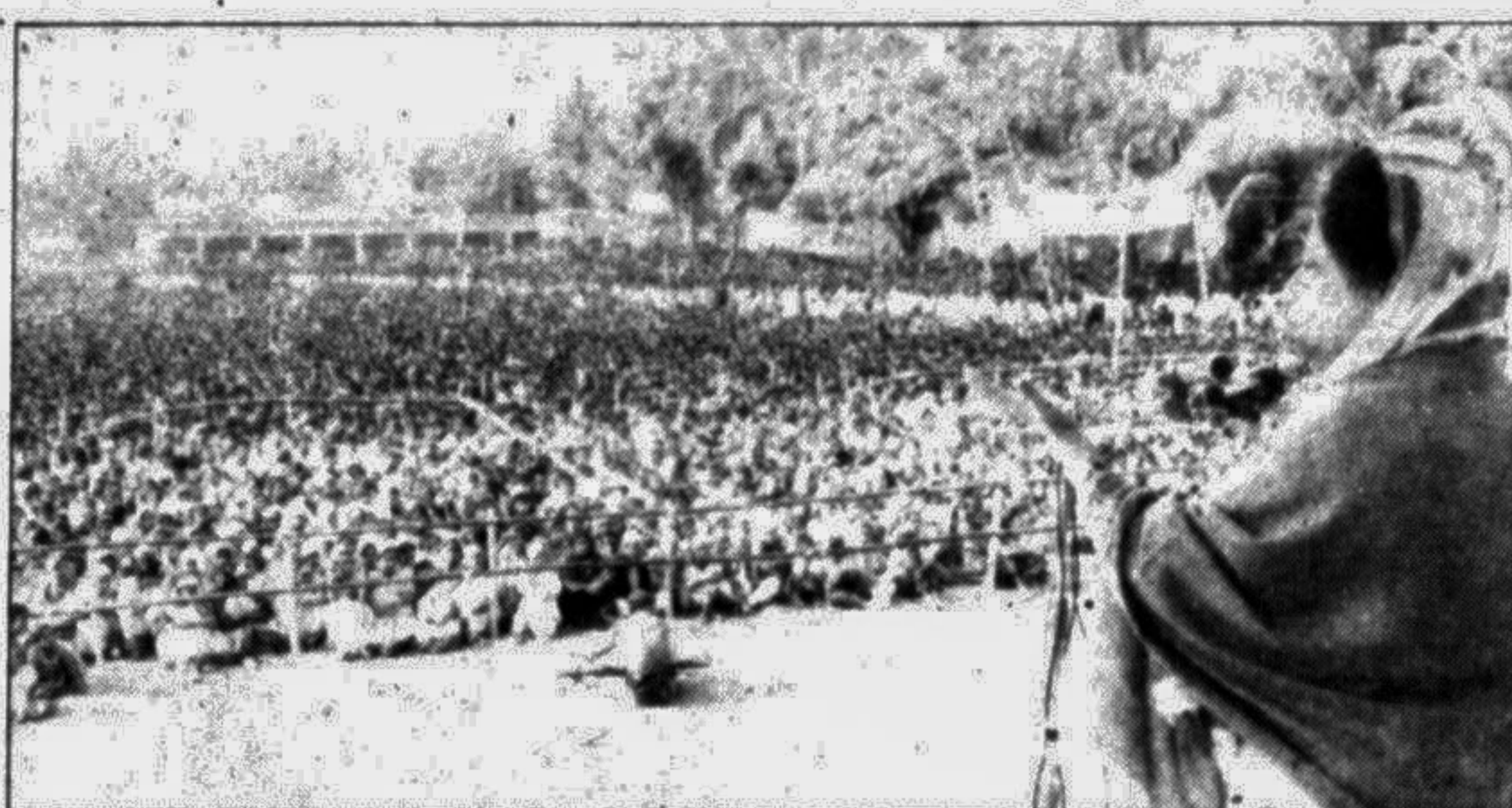
He also said the Foreign Minister of India was to lead his country's delegation at JEC talks but Indian External Affairs Minister Dinesh Singh has communicated that he would not be able to come because of ill health.

Osmani said the Indian Commerce Minister Pranab Mukherjee who will lead his country's team will arrive in the capital on December 27. He said the Bangladesh Foreign Minister and the Indian Commerce Minister are likely to brief the press jointly on the outcome of the JEC meeting on December 29.

When a reporter alleged that Father Timm was engaged in activities detrimental to the interest of the country, the Foreign Secretary replied, "Any citizen of Bangladesh can take part in politics, but no foreigner can do so under the Constitution. If anyone does, it is an abuse of hospitality. However, I am not naming anybody."

Replying to a question on the reported move by certain quar-

Editor: Mahfuz Anam  
Published by Mediaworld Ltd: 52, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000, and printed at City Publishing House Ltd, 90 Kakrail, Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No: 11, Road No: 3, Dhanmandi R/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 500092-4. Advertisement: 500091 (Direct). Fax No: 88-02-863035. GPO Box No: 3257. Cable: DAILYSTAR DHAKA.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a public meeting at the Madhupur College ground in Tangail yesterday. — PID photo

# Saifur asks NCBs to cut excess manpower

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday instructed the four nationalised commercial banks to rationalise their superfluous manpower and change the traditional banking system, reports UNB.

"If necessary, excess manpower should be removed or diverted to other banking activities," he said while addressing a meeting of the senior bankers of the NCBs.

"The officers-employees ratio in the banks be brought to a justifiable level," the minister added.

The four state-run banks have 20,396 officers and 39,511 employees in their 3,515 branches all over the country. The meeting was informed that in some cases less important branches have 10 or more officers each with equal numbers of employees.

Stressing the need for bringing about dynamism in the banking sector, the Finance Minister instructed the bankers to improve their management efficiency.

He also directed them to increase loan disbursement, particularly project loan disbursement. "From now, promotions will be considered on the basis of merit and effectiveness in disbursement and recovery of loans," he warned the bankers.

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# Five killed, two hurt in city incidents

By DMCH Correspondent

At least five persons were killed and two others injured in separate incidents in the city during the last two days.

A pedestrian was killed when a speeding minibus ran over him at the Dakinik Bangla crossing at about 7 am yesterday. The victim Mohammed Afzal Hossain, 26, son of Moslem Uddin died on the spot.

In another road accident an unknown girl in her early twenties, died on the spot when a speeding unidentified truck knocked her down at Zoar Sahara on the Airport Road under the Cantonment Police Station at about 5 am yesterday.

Murad, 23, was seriously injured when he fell from a running bus at Tikatuli area at about 10 am yesterday. He was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where he succumbed to his injuries after admission.

In another road accident a minor boy was crushed under the wheels of a speeding truck at Gopibagh area Monday night. The victim Mohammad Sohel, 4, son of Abdur Rahman died on the spot.

A girl aged about 15, was killed when she fell under a running train at the Malibagh rail crossing Monday morning. The victim died on the spot. She could not be immediately identified.

Meanwhile police recovered the body of a young man from south Paikpara in the city Tuesday morning. Soltaman Kabir, 20, son of Mohammad, Abdul Gani Bhuyan passed Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations from the Comilla Victoria College and came to Dhaka to get himself admitted at the Dhaka University. Kabir lived in a house at South Paikpara along with his friends and was found dead in his bed. Police sent all the bodies to the DMCH morgue for autopsy.

In another incident a grocer was seriously injured when a group of toll collectors stabbed him at Mohammadpur area in the city Tuesday afternoon. The victim Mohammad Abu Miah, 22, alleged that the toll collectors demanded money from him. When he refused, they stabbed him and ransacked his shop. They also snatched Taka fifteen thousand, he claimed.

Abu Miah was admitted to the DMCH with stab injuries in his abdomen.

Rani Begum, 20, was seriously injured when she took acid at Shanur Akhra, Demra in the city Tuesday afternoon.

Rani Begum, wife of Mohammad Akkas Ali, was admitted to the DMCH.

# BNP fulfilling all its pledges: Khaleda

MODHUPUR (Tangail), Dec 21: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today said the BNP, as a mass-oriented party, will continue to work for ensuring welfare of the people and furthering the politics of production and development, reports UNB.

"The centre point of development is village. The country will be developed if the development of villages can be ensured. This is why we have started our development activities from villages," said the Prime Minister.

She told a public meeting at the Modhupur College ground here this afternoon that her government was fulfilling its all commitments one after another and it was pledge-bound to accomplish the remaining task.

Speaking of foreign aid, the PM said, "A nation cannot hold its head high through dependence on aid and begging. We want to place our country in a dignified position in the world."

"We earned independence 23 years ago, why should we now depend on aid and import? We have to come out of these," she told the cheering crowd amid thunderous clappings.

Turning to the economic scenario, she said, the economy of the country has improved, and the per capita income and purchasing capacity of common man increased. The country is now witnessing a development spree as the result of BNP's politics of production and development.

"We have succeeded in boosting food production. Now we want to build industries. We are disbursing loans for this sector. Many closed mills have already resumed operation and more than 2,000 industries of different sizes have been established since the BNP government took over," she said.

Pointing out the baneful impact of shutdown and indiscipline, she said foreign investors felt shy to invest in Bangladesh when they see political unrest caused by frequent hartals, arson and destruction of public property.

Later, the Prime Minister addressed another huge public meeting at Sakhipur thana ground in the late afternoon. Local MPs, minister and leaders apprised her of various problems of the thanas and put forward different development programmes.

Begum Zia gave the assurance that more bridges and roads would be constructed and educational institutions would be nationalised, built and given adequate financial support in both Modhupur and Sakhipur thanas. She instructed the concerned authorities to finish the under-construction roads and bridges immediately.

# Hosts seize the day

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team events, with others offering excellent back-up for the two individual gold shooters.

In fact, Atecur Rahman, the brilliant shooter with quite a bit of experience and success at the international level, became the first claimant of the 117 golds for the taking in the present Games.

His glorious achievement was further heightened by the feat of young Mizanur Rahman Qamar, in a different discipline, being held at a distance, at around the same time.

The 18-year-old swimmer from Kishoreganj, who is the third in a family of seven brothers and sisters, established a new SAF record in the 200m breast-stroke.

The gold glut of the hosts could not, however, make light work of a teenager. He is Jat Abhijit of India. At fourteen, this Class Ten student from Karnataka was yesterday's only winner of two individual medals.

He took the bronze in the 200m breast-stroke and then



Dejected Bangladeshi table tennis player Zobera Rahman Linu rues over her loss at the hands of a Sri Lankan player in the Sixth SAF Games competition at the Dhanmondi gymnasium in the city yesterday. — Star photo

# Role of Grameen Bank, BRAC praised

By Staff Correspondent

The country's Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) Tuesday earned recognition from a UN body for their role in the development of Bangladesh.

The State of the World Children 1994, report published by the UNICEF, mentioned Grameen Bank for its pioneering role in generating productive self-employment through its credit programme.

The country's fourth largest bank, the Grameen Bank, made small loans available to more than one million people of Bangladesh who were previously considered "unbankable," it said.

The report also cited the efforts of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) which organised thousands of poorest citizens into community organisations and is running some 15,000 village-based, non-formal schools.

Some 70 per cent of its students are girls, the report pointed out adding the BRAC earned one third of its income from investments in commercial projects and in-house enterprises.

UNICEF Representative in Dhaka, Rolf C Carriere, while launching the report in the capital, said more than 15,000 non-formal centres run by the NGOs were taking non-formal education to unenrolled or dropped out children, particularly the girls.

The NGOs in Bangladesh have pioneered many innovative approaches to non-formal education. Some of them work unobtrusively without support or recognition, while others have received international acclaim," he said.

At the non-formal education centres, the children are given basic education relevant to their lives in a child-friendly environment, Carriere added.

# Truck-bomb kills 3 in Beirut

BEIRUT, Dec 21: Two members of a right-wing Christian party and a three-month-old baby were killed and 100 wounded in the truck-bomb blast which rocked the party's headquarters near Beirut port, rescue workers said today, reports AFP.

The Phalange party's chief Georges Saadeh charged that enemies of peace in Lebanon were behind Monday night's attack, for which there was no immediate claim of responsibility.

The baby was dug up from the rubble of one of several nearby homes used mainly by squatters and destroyed by the bomb.

Explaining the reasons for the decision, the minister said it would help create skilled manpower. The ultimate objective is solving the unemployment problem, the minister added.

It was also decided to make arrangements for training of the SSC passed students, specially living in the rural areas, on agriculture production and agro-economics.

The cabinet also discussed about the current foodgrains prices in the open market and decided to purchase rice and paddy at a higher rate from the peasants from today.

Following price hike in the open market, the government decided to buy rice at the rate of Taka 325 and paddy at Tk 210 per maund. Earlier, the rate was Tk 310 and 200 respectively.

Yesterday's cabinet meeting, which began at 8:30 pm and ended at 11:30 pm was scheduled to be held the day before. The meeting could not be held on schedule because of the preoccupation of the ministers for the opening ceremony of the Sixth SAF Games in the city Monday.

# Govt telephone bills to be paid in cash

The government has taken some decisions on introducing cash payment system instead of book adjustment of the government telephone bills and balancing the charges of different telephone services, reports BSS.

An official handout said here that the cash payment system of telephone bills would be introduced to check misuse and wastage which was prevailing under the present book adjustment system. It said the cash payment system would ensure financial discipline and accountability.

The new system will be effective from July 1, 1994, the handout said, adding, each government official will be personally responsible for payment of his telephone bills.

DUTA polls

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Dr Syed Hadiuzzaman and Dr AHM Aminur Rahman to compete for the two key posts.

The White group supporters will compete the election from two separate panels.

One faction of the White group nominated Dr Ziaur Shams M M Hujum and Md Aminur Rahman Majumder, while the other faction of the White group nominated professor Monirul Hujum and Professor Md Nurul Amin Bepari for the post of the president and general secretary respectively.

# The Midnight File

**Peter Boross Hungary's new PM**

BUDAPEST, Dec 21: Parliament today elected Peter Boross, a 65-year-old Conservative with a reputation for tough efficiency, as Hungary's next Prime Minister, succeeding the late Jozsef Antall. Boross was endorsed by a vote of 201 to 152 with five abstentions, marking a transfer of power that political leaders said was designed to ensure continuity in Hungary's move toward a free-market democracy, reports Reuters.

**Milosevic heads for victory**

BELGRADE, Dec 21: President Slobodan Milosevic's ruling Socialists edging closer Tuesday to an outright parliamentary majority, according to preliminary returns. With 89 per cent of the vote counted from Sunday's ballot, Election Commission officials said the Socialists — the re-named Communist Party — had at least 122 seats in the 250-seat assembly. They need 126 to give Milosevic a majority and stifle opposition parties that hoped to challenge him. Final results are due Wednesday. Milosevic himself was not up for re-election, reports AP.

# UNICEF lauds Dhaka's struggle for progress

By Staff Correspondent

The State of the World Children Report 1994, published by the UNICEF Tuesday, lauded Bangladesh's strive for progress in the face of great difficulties.

When Bangladesh was born amid war in 1971 followed by flood and famine, the report said, many foreign analysts considered it to be a "basket case" nation with little hope of any future but deepening poverty and despair.

"Today, Bangladesh was more likely to be cited as an example of a very poor country making steady progress in the face of great difficulties," the report said.

The report, which is published and launched worldwide simultaneously spoke of the country's efforts to strengthen the democratic institutions, the rise in the per capita income, expansion of the health services, successful fight against some of the diseases and progress in the family planning programme as manifestations of the country's march towards progress.

Speaking at the launching ceremony, Rolf C Carriere, the Country Representative of the United Nations Children's Fund, also highlighted Bangladesh's support to the Universal Primary Education Programme.

"Going beyond partisan concerns, this commitment is rapidly becoming an urgent societal priority," he observed.

The UNICEF report on the world children was formally launched by US President Bill Clinton in Washington Tuesday along with UNICEF Executive Director James P Grant.

According to the report, Bangladesh's population will be doubled by the year 2026. With the present growth rate, the country's population was likely to be equal to the current population of China, it said.

Briefing newsmen, Carriere said that Bangladesh would receive US dollar 44 million during 1993-95 to help make the education for all programme a success.

The State of the World's Children 1994 showed continued progress in the family planning programmes of the developing countries.

When the programme was launched in 1972, the contraceptive use in Bangladesh was only seven per cent. Now, just twenty years later, the contraceptive use has increased to 40 per cent, said the UNICEF representative.

The report said, that the global annual mortality caused by four major diseases — measles, diarrhoea, whooping cough and tetanus — reduced by 50 per cent during the last

# Dhaka to press

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selected Bangladeshi products for export to India. As a long-term solution to the adverse trade balance, they will also seek Indian investments in joint venture project in Bangladesh with adequate buy-back facilities or even export to third countries.

Given zero or nominal tariff rates, there are good prospects for manufacture of bulk items like cement, iron and steel machinery and spares for export to the eastern Indian states.

Similarly, prospects also exist for setting up textile industries by Indian investors for use in the local garment factories and for export to third countries.

The CII delegation will arrive from Singapore today and is expected to call on the Prime Minister in the evening. The delegations is also expected to call on the finance, industries, commerce and the foreign ministers during their stay in the capital.

MCCI sources said a high-powered Indian delegation has arrived to attend the second meeting of the JEC.

The Joint Economic Committee meeting will be inaugurated by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman and addressed among others, by M Morshed Khan, Special Envoy of the Prime Minister.

# 36 to contest

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The candidates include SK Tayabur Rahman of the BNP, Mahbulul Alam Hiron of the AL, Abdul Gaffar Biswas — Independent — SMA Rob of the JP, Mia Golam Farwar of the Jamaat, Sirajul Islam — Independent — Talukder Abdul Khaleq MP of the AL, Mustafa Rashidi Shuja MP of the AL, Advocate Ansaruddin Ahmed of the Jamaat, and Dr Obaidul Islam of the Bangladesh Jatiya Dal.

Hundreds of people gathered at the Election Commission office in the town chanting slogans in favour of their respective candidates.

The BNP candidate submitted his nomination papers at 11 am while the AL candidates at 3:30 pm.

Some 3,28,769 voters including 1.41 lakh women are expected to cast votes at 210 polling centres in the city.

Rajshahi

Our Rajshahi Correspondent adds, seven, including a female candidate, had submitted their nomination papers for the post of the mayor of Rajshahi City Corporation and 287, including a woman for 30 posts of ward commissioners yesterday.

The candidates for mayor include the incumbent Mizanur Rahman Minu of the BNP, Abdul Matin Khan of the AL, former mayor Durul Huda of the JP, former chairman of Rajshahi Pouroasabha Siddiqur Rahman — Independent — and candidates supported by the JSD, BSD Workers Party and NAP, former deputy mayor Salim Sarder of the JP (Huda), Siddiqur Rahman of the Jamaat and Independent candidate Advocate Enamul Haq.

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