

Boat purchase case against Ershad

Cross-examination of PW-1 ends

Cross-examination of prosecution witness (PW-1) in the Special Case 19 of 1993 began yesterday in the court of Senior Special Judge, Dhaka Md. Abdus Salam, reports BSS.

Deposed president Hussain Muhammad Ershad and K. Inoyama, a Japanese national representing the Marubeni Corporation, are the accused in this case, known as the Japanese boat case. They are charged with misusing funds and causing the State a loss of Taka 33 crore.

AKM Hossain, Deputy Commissioner of Panchagarh, the PW-1, is the informant in this case whose FIR (First Information Report) was lodged in 1992. Hossain, who was the Deputy Director of the Bureau of Anti-Corruption when the FIR was lodged, made his deposition on May 14, 1994.

Formal charge against Ershad and Inoyama, who has remained absconding, were brought on April 11.

Hossain said, he had made a comprehensive enquiry into the matter before lodging the FIR, but declined to divulge the sources of the information.

When pressed by Ershad's defence counsel Yusuf Hossain

Humayun to name the source, Public Prosecutor (PP) Abdur Razzak Khan raised objection and said as per law, the witness was not bound to disclose the identity of the source. The PW-1 said that he was not divulging the source at the directive of his superiors.

In reply to a query, the witness said he had visited the President's Secretariat, Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation and the Economic Relations Division on the Finance Ministry in connection with the case.

The PW-1 informed the court that preliminary enquiry into the case began sometime in May-June 1991, but he could not remember the exact date.

The witness said the Bangladesh Government had initiated an agreement for the procurement of the boats in question and that it was also a fact that that agreement was initiated in the backdrop of extreme national emergency caused by the unprecedented floods of 1988.

When asked to comment as to whether there was any misappropriation involved in the purchase of the boats which are suitable for Bangladesh's

weather, PW Hossain answered in the affirmative. But he disagreed with the defence suggestion that the personal initiative of Ershad and his relations with the Japanese government had helped in securing the grant for procuring the boats.

The PW-1 strongly rejected a suggestion that being jealous at the success of the former president, the Boat Case had been initiated with a political motive. He said it is not true that Japan, being impressed by the excellent management of flood situation extended the grant to procure the boats. He said Japan had extended the grant perhaps because it was moved by the suffering of the people of Bangladesh.

The court was adjourned till today a few minutes after the start of deposition by the second witness in this case.

GKSM Shahjahan Amin, a retired Joint Secretary (Relief and Administration) in the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation is the PW-2.

Special Public Prosecutor Asrafuldin Ahmed assisted Razzak Khan while Yusuf Humayun was aided by Fazle Rabbi, MP and Nitai Roy Chowdhury.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia presiding over the weekly Cabinet meeting at Bangabhaban yesterday. — PID photo

Dissolution of Nepali parliament

Court orders cabinet to explain

KATHMANDU, Aug 1: Nepal's Supreme Court has ordered the cabinet to explain its dissolution of parliament in a unique case likely to clarify the balance of power among the executive, legislative and judicial branches, reports AFP.

After hearing debate on a motion challenging the constitutionality of Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala's recommendation to dissolve parliament, the Supreme Court today ordered his cabinet to explain the more, court sources said.

On Koirala's advice, King Birendra last month disbanded Congress and called for new elections.

Two ex-parliamentarians, Ganesh Pandit of the Nepal Communist Party and Hari Prasad Nepal of the Nepali Congress, filed a motion asking the court to strike down the disbanding of Congress.

A panel of senior lawyers

argued that Koirala violated Nepal's new constitution, passed in 1990 when he advised the King to call new elections.

The case is important because it will give the court its first opportunity to outline the separation of powers enshrined in the law, which was designed to protect Nepal's moves toward democracy under a constitutional monarchy.

The Supreme Court panel reviewing the case is headed by Chief Justice Biswo Nath Upadhyaya, who was the chairman of the 1990 constitution's drafting committee.

During the four-hour debate today, lawyers supporting the motion argued that the Prime Minister had already faced impeachment and resigned from his post before calling for new elections.

They argued that under those circumstances, Koirala had no right to recommend

disbanding the parliament. During the hearing, the Chief Justice issued an order to Koirala's cabinet to explain the cause and legal grounds for the disbandment.

Chief Justice Upadhyaya said a final hearing would be held on August 22.

Lawyers Sarbagya Ratna Tuladhar, Krishna Prasad Bhandari and Sushila Karki told the court that the future of Nepal's parliamentary democracy and human rights guarantees rest with the legislature.

Spectators packed into the court room to hear the case, while several hundred others, including students, youths, politicians, and intellectuals, listened to arguments from a passageway outside the building.

Political analysts said that the fate of beleaguered Koirala now hangs on the final verdict of the Supreme Court.



Mourners carry the body of a Hizb-ul-Mujahideen militant for burial yesterday in northern Kashmir following a fierce battle between Muslim secessionists and Indian security forces. At least six persons were killed in the battle. — AFP photo

Sufia Kamal calls for fresh vow

By Staff Correspondent

The new chief of the Ghatak Dalai Nirmul Samannaya Committee Begum Sufia Kamal yesterday called for a fresh vow for translating into reality Jahanara Imam's dream — trial of the 'war criminals' and elimination of the fundamentalist forces.

The elderly poet made the appeal while addressing a public rally in the capital yesterday, a day after she was made the convener of the Nirmul Committee.

The rally was organised at Bangabandhu Avenue in protest against last week's killings in Chittagong, allegedly by the Jamaat-Shibir activists.

The Nirmul chief also called on all pro-Liberation people to work unitedly for freeing the nation from the grip of the orthodox, fanatic and anti-Liberation forces.

"War criminal Golam Azam and his party the Jamaat-e-Islami committed genocide

during the 1971 Liberation War and they have again become active to push the country towards fanaticism in the name of Islam", Sufia Kamal said and warned the people about the religion peddlers.

Recalling late Jahanara Imam's contributions to the campaign against the killers and collaborators of '71, Imam's successor suggested that the best way to pay regards to the late leader was to finish her incomplete task.

Chaired by Sufia Kamal, the rally was also addressed by Nirmul leaders including Abdur Razzak MP, Kazi Aref Ahmed, Prof. Abdul Mannan Chowdhury, Syed Hasan Imam, Nurul Islam Nahid, and Ahmad Chowdhury.

Abdur Razzak, in his speech, alleged the killers and collaborators of '71 were conspiring to revert Bangladesh to Pakistan and accused the Khaleda government of back-

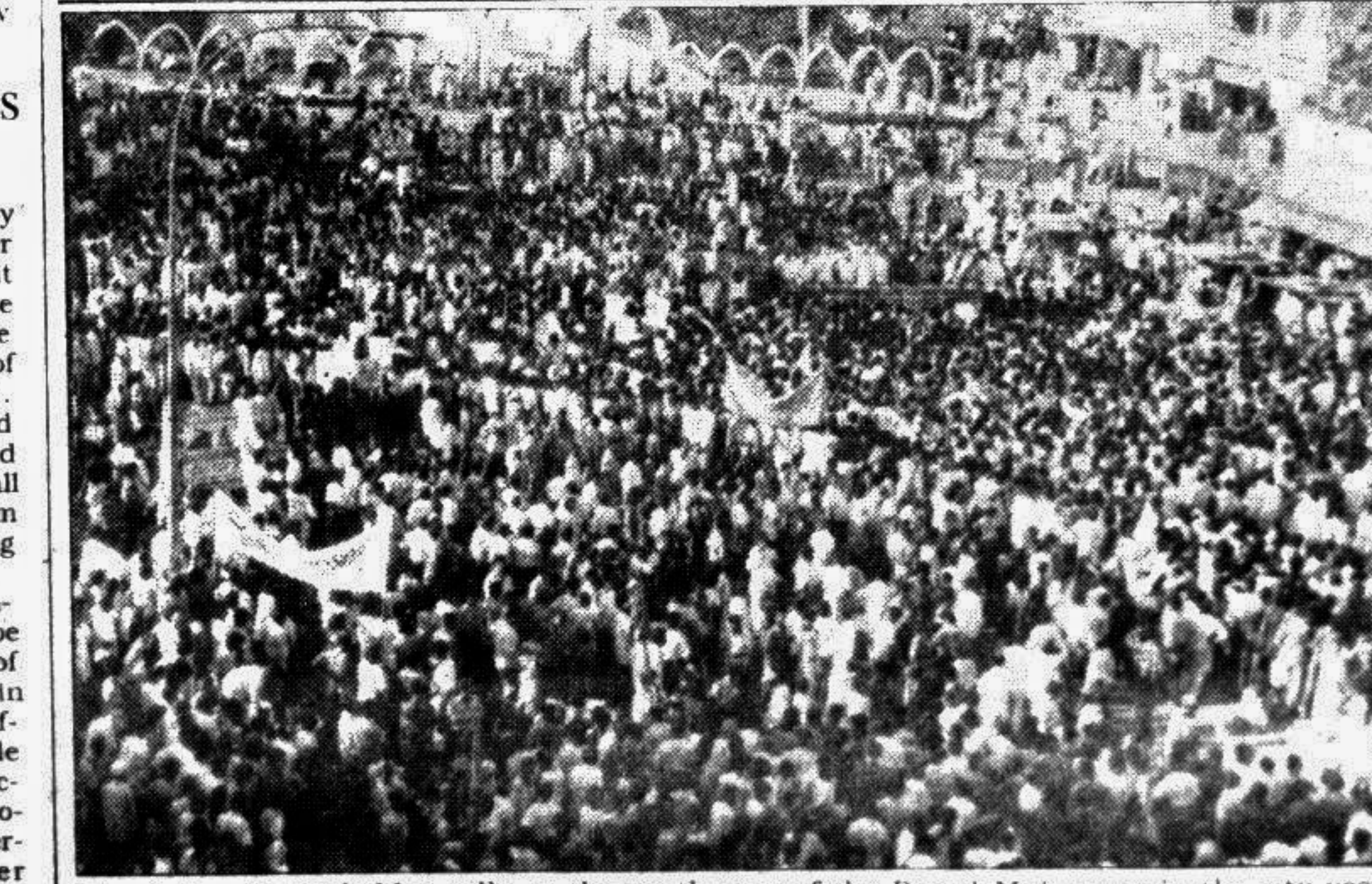
ing the conspirators. Razzak accused the Khatib of Baitul Mukarram of committing treason by speaking against the Liberation War and the independence of the country.

"The patriotic Imandars (believers) won against the religion peddlers and fatwahas in 1971 and they would again be victors against the same evil forces", Razzak hoped.

Kazi Aref said the rise of fundamentalism and communalism was a shame for the pro-Liberation forces.

Prof. Mannan Chowdhury branded the present government as protector of the pro-Pakistan people in the country. He also demanded trial of the Baitul Mukarram's Khatib as a traitor.

Hasan Imam said police and BDR personnel did not resort to action against the Jamaat-Shibir armed goons in Chittagong because of government directives.



The Jatiya Party held a rally at the south gate of the Baitul Mukarram in the city yesterday. — Star photo

The Midnight File

Serbs ready to reopen talks

SARAJEVO, Aug 1: Bosnia's Serbs said today they wanted to reopen peace negotiations immediately with the major powers. Bosnian Serb leaders said they wanted to discuss the division of Bosnia outlined in a map which lies at the heart of the peace plan proposed by the 'contact group' of the United States, Russia, Britain, Germany and France, reports Reuters.

Indian police raid ULFA hideout in Assam

NEW DELHI, Aug 1: Indian police raided an Assamese separatist hideout in neighbouring Bhutan but the guerrillas fled after trading shots. An Assam state government spokesman said today. Police crossed the international border and chased some 15 activists of the Maoist United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) for five km (three miles) into Bhutanese territory on Sunday, he said, reports Reuters.

SAARC ministers say meet was constructive

Most of the SAARC foreign ministers left Dhaka yesterday for their respective homes describing the two-day meeting of the Council of Ministers as 'very useful' and 'constructive' for the overall performance of the seven-nation regional forum, reports BSS.

They were unanimous that the deliberations which took place in an atmosphere of 'utmost cordiality and traditional SAARC spirit' would not only help implement the SAARC programmes more meaningfully but also create a propitious climate for next summit in India in April, next year.

First to leave yesterday was Maldivian Foreign Minister Fatullah Jameel, who complimented Bangladesh for making the meeting 'very rewarding' and said the event was another testimony of SAARC determination to put new vigour in its cherished goal of collective cooperation in the region.

Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman saw Jameel off at the airport.

Next to leave was Indian State Minister for External Affairs R.L. Bhatia, who said the meeting was marked by the SAARC cooperative spirit and added that Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Foreign Minister Mostafizur Rahman deserved praises for the 'successful' meeting. He said India was eagerly looking forward to receiving the SAARC leaders in April, 1995.

Bhatia also described his talks with the Bangladesh Foreign Minister on a bilateral plane as 'very useful'.

State Minister for Textile Major (Retd) MA Mannan saw the Indian State Minister off at the airport. Also present were Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Farooq Sobhan and his opposite number in Bangladesh K. Raghunath.

Pakistan Foreign Minister Sardar Asef Ahmad Ali expressed his total satisfaction over the SAARC meeting and said he admired the concerned people here for their untiring efforts to make the conference a success.

He also described his talks

Tools Factory

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a time-sharing basis. "We are thinking of evolving an innovative approach to utilise the capacity of the Factory's machinery", he said. "We are conscious that the expensive machinery at the factory should be used as far as possible."

Located on 260 acres of land in Joydebpur, the Factory started commercial production in the early 80s. Over the years it incurred a total loss of around Tk 137 crore, of which bank interest alone is Tk 115 crore, sources concerned said.

The factory has an accumulated liability of about Tk 60 crore with Sonali Bank while it owes another Tk 2.25 crore to Titas Gas and other companies, the sources said.

The total assets of the factory were estimated at around 2000 crore a few years ago. A fresh estimate is now going on, the sources said.

The factory, said to be the biggest of its kind in the sub-continent, could manufacture almost all types of metal-based industrial products. It has some 800 types of machine including forging and casting units. It could produce hundreds of things.

The planning for the factory started in 1966 in a project profile of Tk 30 crore. But when the implementation began, the project cost stood at Tk 135 crore.

The factory was set up to feed other industries. But since industrialisation process remained slow, it did not have much buyers, factory sources said.

"The main purpose of this factory should not be making profits. It is unique in all aspects. It can help industrialisation of the country," they said.

"If the authorities are committed enough, the Machine Tools Factory still has got a future. If not, it dies," the sources remarked.

with Foreign Minister Mostafiz on bilateral matters as "very good," saying, two countries enjoyed "very friendly" relations.

Asked about his meeting with Indian State Minister for External Affairs in Dhaka Sunday Ali said it was a useful meeting when both sides agreed to resolve all bilateral issues through discussions.

Foreign Minister Mostafiz bade farewell to the Pakistani minister at the airport.

Also present were Additional Foreign Secretary Mohiuddin Ahmed, Bangladesh High Commissioner to Islamabad QMA Rahim and his counterpart in Bangladesh Anwar Kemal.

Sri Lankan Foreign Secretary Bernard Tilakaratne also left yesterday. Foreign Minister ACS Hameed had left earlier for upcoming national elections in his country. Foreign Secretary MR Osmany saw him off.

Bangladesh High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Shamsher Mubin Chowdhury and Sri Lankan High Commissioner in Dhaka Dr Abu Hanifa were present.

DUTA to boycott Dr Ershadul Bari

By DU Correspondent

The teachers of Dhaka University have decided to boycott Dr M Ershadul Bari.

The Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) took the decision at a meeting yesterday.

Dr M Ershadul Bari, Dean of the Department of Law of the university, was expelled from the DUTA last Friday for his alleged anti-organisational activities.

Earlier, on July 25, the DUTA suspended the membership of Dr Bari as he reportedly spoke against the playing of the national anthem at the senate meeting of the National University on July 19.

HSC exams

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terday. No untoward incident was reported from any of the centres. The board is also conducting HSC examinations at five overseas centres.

No report was, however, received as regards the foreign centres at Abu Dhabi, Doha, Jeddah, Riyadh and Tripoli.

Our Comilla Correspondent reported 196 expulsions from 119 centres. CID police held two persons on charge of selling what they called Bengali first paper questions. But actually those were not the question papers.

Meanwhile, a government handout last night dismissed press reports on leakage of questions papers of Comilla Board. The reports were baseless and misleading, the hand-out said.

According to our Rajshahi correspondent, 790 examinees were expelled in 15 districts out of 16 under the Rajshahi Board. A total of 1117 answer scripts were found with mistakes in using the 'computer sheets'. Officials however said those would be corrected by the Board.

A report from Jessore mentioned 69 expulsions no untoward incidents were reported.

21 indicted

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Armed terrorists gunned down six men and wounded many others at Nawabganj under Lalbagh thana on January 31, a day after the city mayor and ward commissioner polls. Of the injured, one died later.

The newly elected Ward Commissioner of the area, Humayun Kabir, lodged a case with the Lalbagh police on the day.

The accused persons are Abdul Aziz, Abdul Alim alias Shaheen, Abdus Salam alias Mott, Jahid Hossain alias Babu, Monir Patwari, Swapon, Selim, Javed, Minna, Afsar Hossain, Mohammad Faruq, Dil Mohammad, Mahtab Hossain, Delwar Hossain, Sattar, Mozammel, Haji Abdul Majid, Kahu, Joyanal, Amir Hossain and Abdul Hossain.

People will bear witness to BNP's work: PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday said the people would bear witness to the development carried out during the past three and a half years by her government, reports UNB.

She ridiculed the statement of Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina who reportedly told a public meeting in Feni on Sunday that the present BNP government had done nothing for the people.

"The people are witness to what the BNP has done for their wellbeing," Begum Zia said while addressing a function at her Hare Road office last night, arranged to welcome those who joined her party from different political parties of Feni district.

About 500 leaders and workers of the Awami League-backed Sramik League and Jubo League, the Jamaat-e-Islami's student front Islami Chhatra Shibir, and UP chairmen and members from Chhagalnaiya, Parashuram and Fulgazi thanas joined the BNP yesterday.

The Prime Minister said

the BNP government 'had always worked for improvement of the lot of commonman and development of the country and would continue to do so in future.'

She mentioned the improvements of infrastructure and in the country's economy, and reminded that the BNP government had inherited a ruined economy from the nine years of autocratic rule.

Begum Zia listed the development programmes initiated by her government in all sectors for socio-economic improvement of the people and the country.

"We have fulfilled most of our election pledges," she said.

Post and Telecommunications Minister Tariqul Islam, Livestock and Fisheries Minister Abdullah al-Noman, State Minister for Textiles Maj (Retd) Abdul Mannan, Whip Mahbubul Alam Tara, Feni district BNP president Abul Hashem, vice president Abdullah Chowdhury and general secretary Shahiduddin Ferdous also spoke on the occasion.



Abu Sayeed's 7th death anniversary today

By Staff Correspondent

The seventh anniversary of the death of Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury, a former President of Bangladesh, will be observed today.

Justice Chowdhury was the second president of the country.

Qurankhwani and milad mahfil have been arranged at the mazar premises of the late president at Nagbari in Tangail. The Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury National Memorial Council will hold a discussion meeting and distribute money among poor and meritorious students.

Justice Chowdhury, who was one of the organisers of the country's Liberation War, was a special representative of the Provisional Government of Bangladesh with its capital in Mujibnagar in 1971. He was elected Chairman of the UN Human Rights Commission in 1985.

Oli: Bhatia

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completion of the repatriation of tribal refugees would contribute to further improving relation between the two countries.

Indian Foreign Secretary K Srinivasan, Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Farooq Sobhan, Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh K Raghunathan and Secretary, Special Affairs Division, Ataul Karim were present on the occasion.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

Printed & Published by A. S. Mahmud, Managing Director, on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd, 52, Motiheel C/A, Dhaka-1000, from 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, Commercial: 500091 (Direct), Fax No: 88-02-863035, GPO Box No: 3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA.